Encounter

June 1976 50p

David Holden:
The Other (vanished) India

François Bondy:
Pasolini's Murder

T G Rosenthal:
Michael Ayrton

Arnold Hottinger:
Two Spains

Jules Telesin:
Hemingway (cut)

John Wain
Should Poets try to save the World?

Malcolm Bradbury
Short Story

Peter Schwiefert
Letters to a Mother (II)

Edited by Melvin J Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Use our intelligence.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Encounter

JUNE 1976

VOL. XLVI NO. 6

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* ANTHONY THWAITE
MANAGING EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley.* ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Bryan Healing.*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Anthony Robinson.* ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: *John Hall.*
ADVISORY BOARD: *Maurice Cranston, D. J. Enright, Anthony Hartley, Leo Labedz, Goronwy Rees, Edward Shils, John Weightman.*
PUBLISHING ADVISERS: *Lord Ardwick, Blouke Carus, Lord Cudlipp, Cecil Harmsworth King, Leon Levy, Jack Watmough.*
Per copy: UK 50p: USA & Canada $1.25: Back numbers 65p ($2.00).
Annual subscription: UK £5.50: USA & Canada $14.00 (by air $15.50): Elsewhere £6.75.
Address for all Departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).
US news-stand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. P.O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. ©*1976 by Encounter Ltd.*
Manuscripts are only returned if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp or International Reply Coupons).

NOBODY HERE IN ENGLAND (*story*) 3 *Malcolm Bradbury*
GLIMPSES OF THE OTHER INDIA 15 *David Holden*
POETRY & SOCIAL CRITICISM 25 *John Wain*
LETTERS TO A MOTHER (II) 34 *Peter Schwiefert*

CINEMA
MYTHMASH 50 *John Weightman*

POETRY
Paul Groves 14, *Stewart Conn* 24, *Alistair Elliot* 33, *Peter Porter* 47, *R. V. Bailey* 48, *John Mole* 49, *Alan Brownjohn* 52, *Freda Downie* 55, *Carol Rumens* 80

NOTES & TOPICS
ON THE DEATH OF PASOLINI 53 *François Bondy*

BOOKS & WRITERS
A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY 57 *R. W. Burchfield*
"I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY IN MY LIFE" 64 *Anthony Thwaite*
BORN TO LOSE 67 *Geoffrey Bownas*
THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL MOSES 70 *Hyam Maccoby*

POINTS OF THE COMPASS
TWO SPAINS, TWO HISTORIES 76 *Arnold Hottinger*

EAST & WEST
HOW TO IMPROVE HEMINGWAY (MOSCOW STYLE) 81 *Jules Telesin*

MEMOIR
MICHAEL AYRTON 87 *T. G. Rosenthal*

LETTERS 93

AUTHORS 86

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arthur Koestler

The Thirteenth Tribe

THE KHAZAR EMPIRE AND ITS HERITAGE

Koestler's exceptional study of a remote Eastern European empire which converted to Judaism in the 8th century challenges all accepted theories about the origins of western Jewry.

'A fascinatingly controversial book. Koestler marshals his argument with great skill . . . he is certainly very persuasive indeed.'
Philip Toynbee, Observer

'Stimulating . . . fascinating political overtones.'
George Steiner, Sunday Times

'This most admirable of central European authors has added as clear and exciting an essay as one could wish to a subject in which the confusions have been tragic and the facts, one now sees, extraordinary.' Robin Lane Fox, Financial Times

Hutchinson £4.75

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Malcolm Bradbury

Nobody Here in England

THE FACULTY CLUB on campus accommodated academic visitors for twelve dollars a night, in pleasant circumstances; and it was here that Leo Dennie, an administrative person, found a room, the very best room, for Mrs Prokosch, when at last the citadel fell, and the college acceded to her long-expressed desire that she should come and speak at it. On the early afternoon of her day of arrival, Dennie, an elegant young man, with a decent concern for making things go smoothly, and a mild pride in his capacity to do so, got in his car at the Administration Building, and drove, over the highway, through the campus, to the Faculty Club, just to check the reservation and make sure that all was well. As he drove, he began to prospect the visit, as people do, and a few uncertainties began to strike him. Mrs Prokosch, it was quite clear from the aristocratic tone and the European flamboyances of the letters she wrote, was a woman who would tolerate no hitches. He expected none, except that the whole visit was contentious, and a political man, a man of tact, a man of organisational ability, a man like himself, might well have thought it the wiser thing to make the reservation at the College Motor Lodge on the green; then, if anything did happen to go wrong, the college itself would be just a little less implicated. But then, again, not. Mrs Prokosch was, after all, coming to make a benefaction as well as give a lecture; indeed the latter had been the price exacted for the former. That put the college in the position of persuader; and the charm of the place itself, and it had some, the charm of the people, was part of the persuasion. In any case, Mrs Prokosch was staying for only one night, which, in Dennie's view, based on experience, was just about the right length for any sort of romantic relationship; beyond that point the charm of novelty began to be replaced by the wrinkles of confrontation. Here was the faculty club, new, comfortable, and one of the best buildings on campus; it looked reassuring to Dennie, and perfectly right, as, smart in his hundred dollar Burberry, carrying a cellophane-sealed bunch of flowers in one hand, he got out of the white Mercedes, and ran up the steps.

Inside the foyer, behind the reception desk, in a black dress that showed the top slopes of large tanned breasts, stood Mrs Schnodd, the resident manageress, smoking a small cigar, and counting keys. "Aren't they beautiful?" asked Mrs Schnodd, leaning forward and peering at the flowers through the wrap. "I'll find you my very best vase for them." "I have a desire to spread perfection", said Dennie. "You look like a beau", said Mrs Schnodd. "These are for the lady?" "It's a welcoming touch", said Dennie, "Don't misunderstand, She must be eighty." "Well, I gave you this room," said Mrs Schnodd, opening a door, "I always think this one is our best." Mrs Schnodd went to the window, and drew the drapes; outside stood a most precious view, out on to the rough lawns of the campus, with the white spire of the chapel poking up out of the elms, caught dead centre in the window. The little square of dissent, where the student protesters and the graffiti artists endemic to any campus operated, was hidden away round a happy corner; the scene was a vignette of the arcadian campus, the field of learning. There were trees with gently falling leaves, there were blue jays hopping in the grass; under a maple three students sat solemnly reading, while to the right a group of faculty in track suits euphorically practised football passes,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beneath a stark blue sky. "That's perfect", said Dennie, "Can we keep it like that?" He put the flowers down, went through into the sanitised private bathroom, and filled the vase with water. Then he posed the vase on the table in front of the window, and began arranging the flowers, dropping them neatly in in an elegant display. "You know you should have been some kind of artist", said Mrs Schnodd, pulling the pleats in her hair straight with her fingers. A leaf dropped; Dennie punctiliously swept it up with his hand, and, put it in his pocket. "I'll just leave her a note", he said. He sat down at the writing desk, took a sheet of college-crested paper, and wrote a brief message of welcome: giving his campus telephone number, asking Mrs Prokosch to call him once she had settled in, explaining that he would show her round and introduce her to the President, Dr Halpert, who looked forward to welcoming her formally.

IT WAS ONE OF SEVERAL problems on Dennie's mind that, in fact, Dr Halpert did not really look forward to welcoming her at all. He rarely looked forward to welcoming anyone, not being a welcoming man; but Mrs Prokosch had, with her letters, already induced in him a severe trepidation, and all one could hope was that, despite this, he would remain on campus and not head off to his lakeside cottage on a sudden fishing call. For three or four years now, Mrs Prokosch's letters had been regular items in his President's mailbag. They all began "Distinguished Scholar", a judgment on himself that Halpert, a modest man, did not share; they contained extensive literature on Women's Rights and the Feminist movement, not a topic of great interest to this President of a man's college; they also indicated that, conditions being right, Mrs Prokosch had conceived a wish to give the institution what she called, in her correspondence, "a gift worth the bestowing", this being "my singular collection of intimate letters and association items of the late George Bernard Shaw." It was the thought of the gift that raised the most trepidation; like all colleges, this one welcomed benefaction, but it was never a simple matter, a pure disinterested activity of the mind; and Halpert did not like the mind sullied. Benefactors had, after all, a taste for approaching as many colleges as they could, and raising the stakes of reward as high as possible; there were also forgeries, and problems of insurance; caution was necessary. Halpert was a sharp but simple man, a native Ohioan of Baptist background who had scarcely ever left his own state and believed himself perpetually vulnerable to east coast deceit; caution took up much of his time. He always hid letters of this type for several months, or replied expressing interest but explaining that he was too infirm to meet the donor. First Folios went to Texas, Thackeray papers to Illinois by default; in this Halpert found an evidence of his basic integrity. "These spooks", he used to say, when the faculty increasingly began to indicate concern. "I get a whole lot of letters from spooks like this. Oh, they've got the goodies, but what do they want in exchange? I'll tell you: academic honours superior to Einstein's?"

IT WAS DENNIE HIMSELF who had rescued Mrs Prokosch, after coming on her correspondence one day, tucked away in a file about some quite different matter, where Halpert had put it. "Shaw was an incredible correspondent", he told Halpert. "His letters get high prices. And there must be thousands that haven't reached the dealers or the libraries yet. He just wrote so many." "Postcards to women", said Halpert. "A forger's paradise." "They were good postcards", said Dennie. "And a fascinating lot of women." The thought of the sort of fascinating women Shaw might have known clearly brought new agonies to Halpert's mind; the letters went back into the files again, "under review", and would undoubtedly have stayed there had the college not appointed as new head of the English Department Ethan Elbow, a young man from Princeton, who wore tennis shoes and was suave with passionate ambitions. He wanted a graduate programme, and was interested in anything remotely resembling research materials; he had made a public speech of thanks to a colleague who had returned from a summer trip to Europe bearing a toothbrush used by E. M. Forster. It was he who had suggested that the college set up a research resources committee. "What about the spooks?" Dennie had said. "Okay, show him the spooks", said Halpert. "But find out what

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they're all trying to shake us down for." "I ask but one recompense", Mrs Prokosch had written, in reply to Dennie's delicate letter, indicating collegiate poverty and the rarity of its award of honorary degrees, "It is my wish to address your young men on the subject of GBS, a much misunderstood genius, whom it was my pleasure to know very intimately." "One lecture?" Halpert had said in relief. "What kind of shakedown is that?" And so it was that Mrs Prokosch was coming, to this place, this room, this bed; Dennie checked the room out once more, and then left with Mrs Schnodd.

"But *how* is this lady coming?" asked Mrs Schnodd, as they walked down the thickly carpeted staircase toward the foyer. "Mysteriously, Mrs Schnodd", said Dennie, "I offered to meet her at the airport. But she said she'd like to descend in her own way. I guess there's some divine agency that takes charge accounts from people like her." "This reservation is for one night, right?" asked Mrs Schnodd, as they reached the desk, from which Dennie took a packet of British Player's; it was the only place in town you could buy them. "That's it, a one night stand" said Dennie. "I asked because I thought maybe she was coming permanently", said Mrs Schnodd. "She sent us this great sort of valise by Railway Express. Take a look. It's right there in the cloakroom." It was a big, old-fashioned, ship's cabin trunk, emblazoned with ancient labels from Cunard and French line and Matson, strapped with leather, scraped with use. He looked, and it occurred to him, with a momentary sense of sin, that perhaps this was the point of it all, the thing itself, the all-too-beneficatory object. The Jamesian shivers ran over him, and the corresponding scruples; one didn't, one couldn't, possibly touch. "She certainly doesn't travel light", said Dennie. "I'll drive back to Administration until she comes." "Okay, Mr Dennie, baby", said Mrs Schnodd. "And I'll give you a call right away she gets in, how's that?" "Fine", said Dennie, and ran down the steps into the slanting fall sun. His white Mercedes 220, the only one in town, an object of some pride, stood elegantly in the gravelled lot; he got in and drove out through the campus, towards Administration. Some scruple had separated Administration from the main campus, setting it across the main highway to Columbus, so the old campus retained its ancient provincial dignity.

It was a beautiful Ohio fall day; the colours were good, the atmosphere sharp, almost tactile. The old red brick college buildings, with their wooden detail, framed with white rail fences, overhung with reddening trees, made an elegant picture of American charm. There were Halloween pumpkins in the windows of the dorms, and dead leaves had been blown into the wheels of the bicycles, which stood in slotted blocks outside them. It was a spared place; Dennie, though an administrator rather than a scholar, a man of files and secretaries, no intellectual, felt its virtue. It had tasted the troubles of the last agonised decade, when bombs and hate and blood seemed to have attended what before had been for Dennie, on the outside, the serene virtue of critical thought. Once some black students, urging non-negotiable demands, had retreated on to a roof and begun to strip it, throwing the shingles down on the student body below. But the Professor of Philosophy, a renegade Englishman from Cambridge, reputedly an admired pupil of G. E. Moore, had climbed to the roof, in a Norfolk jacket, and had reasoned with them, and discussed ethical imperatives, and the measure of good, and the mean of virtue, and they had come down, and reasoned, and duly graduated, and the community of intelligence had survived. The students challenged; there were always anguishes. But the faculty were generally revered, as they can be in provincial places, where there is some real paucity of wise men; and the general tone was of a virtuous mean. Politeness prevailed. Even if Mrs Prokosch's lecture tonight were to be terrible beyond belief, the critical wisdom would function quietly; no one would protest aloud, or sweep from the room, or ask the wounding question; it would be discussed briefly elsewhere, and forgotten. Dennie reached the main gates, ever open; he halted the Mercedes; he inspected for traffic.

AN ANCIENT plum-coloured Pontiac was battling on the main highway out of town, headed in the direction of Columbus, eighty miles away; suddenly, without showing signals, it came for the college gateway, and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for him. He kept the Mercedes stationary as the other car, with a flamboyant desperation, took the curve. An elderly, white-haired woman, with a red face, was heaving at the wheel, at the same time glaring through the windshield and mouthing speech. Something lightly snicked the side of his car; the Pontiac swept past; inspecting his mirror, Dennie saw that it had pulled off the road behind him, and stopped. The woman leaned from the window and waved at him imperiously. A traditional and ingrained wisdom told him directly that this was Mrs Prokosch. He backed the Mercedes into safety, got out, went across to the Pontiac. Mrs Prokosch sat firmly in her seat, big knees wide apart; she looked suspiciously at him from the large red face, with considerable white eyebrows; she began to talk. Her window was wound up, so that it was impossible to hear her; Dennie tapped politely on the glass and indicated that she should wind it down. Proximate but isolated, they stared at each other thus for several seconds. Then, in unwilling concession Mrs Prokosch opened the quarter light. "I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you", said Dennie pleasantly. "I said you nearly hit me back there, young man", said Mrs Prokosch. "If I hadn't been a driving artist we'd both be dead now." "Are you Mrs Prokosch?" asked Dennie. "How do you know that name?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "I'm Leo Dennie," said Dennie, "I arranged your visit." "All right, I'll tell you", said Mrs Prokosch, "I am." "Good", said Dennie. "We're very pleased to see you." "So you drive into me", said Mrs Prokosch. "I've been driving fifty years and you're the first accident I've nearly had. Or that's my story."

"Well, you're here", said Dennie. "Let me take you to your room at the Faculty Club." "Well, Dennie", said Mrs Prokosch, "you look like a nice, well-endowed young man. Why don't you do that?" "I'll turn my car round", said Dennie. "If you'd follow me." "I'll be right there on your tail", said Mrs Prokosch. "Maybe even putting a little salt on it." Dennie went back to the Mercedes, and turned it; he passed the Pontiac, which fell into line behind him, and followed him uncomfortably closely to the Club. Outside the Club, they parked side by side. "Hey, Dennie", said Mrs Prokosch, swinging one leg out of her car, revealing vast bloomers under her skirt, "you know, you can drive quite well if you try?" "Thank you", said Dennie. "How about bringing in my luggage, Dennie?" said Mrs Prokosch, handing him her trunk key. He opened the trunk: an abundant plenty of suitcases and boxes, Safeway bags and baskets, met his eyes. He lifted out three suitcases and strung them around him. "See that totebag there?" said Mrs Prokosch. "Tote it for me, Dennie." They mounted the steps; at the top, Mrs Prokosch turned, said "Ber-rump", and pushed open the glass doors with her buttocks. "I guess this must be your visitor, Mr Dennie", said Mrs Schnodd, standing there in the foyer, smiling nicely. "Did you get a trunk come for me?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "It's right here", said Mrs Schnodd. "Well, I guess you opened it", said Mrs Prokosch. "They weren't there, were they?" "Oh, no", said Dennie. "Show me the can, Dennie", said Mrs Prokosch. When Mrs Prokosch had gone in, Mrs Schnodd and Dennie, draped in suitcases, stared at each other. "I feel like an old, tired gigolo", said Dennie. "I guess it suits you, too", said Mrs Schnodd.

"SEE THAT ONE right there?" asked Mrs Prokosch, cutting into a rare steak. "That's one of him at dinner. The food before him is all nutritional. GBS was vegetarian, you know; he thought his diet gave him his vital energy. Maybe it did too, he lived to a marvellous old age." "You're doing fine yourself, Mrs Prokosch", said Dr Halpert, his bright round face shining beneath his white crew-cut; he was bearing it all splendidly. "Seventy-eight, not bad for a steak buff", said Mrs Prokosch, swilling wine. "Who is this beside him?" asked Peter Luby, a young instructor at the dinner with a purpose; it had been his designated task, for weeks, to read through the Shaw letters and memoirs in the library, and assess the truth or falsity of Mrs Prokosch. "Oh, that's, hell, I don't know, H. G. Wells, one of that crowd", she said, not bothering to look. "May I?" asked Ethan Elbow, taking the photograph, and putting on a pair of spectacles that aged him instantly into a worn old scholar. "Are you on this photograph, Mrs Prokosch?" "Do I look as if I'm on it?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "No, I wasn't even around then." "I see",

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

said Elbow, "How did you acquire it?" "How do you think, Perry Mason?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "He sent it to me. He sent me many things. And if you can get those spectacles to focus down there on the right-hand bottom corner, you'll see he signed it for me too." "To my Vera", said Elbow. "Is that your name, Vera?" "No", said Mrs Prokosch, "I guess he just called me Vera, for some reason. It means truth." "Yes", said Elbow. "He had a remarkable beard", said Halpert, "A most impressive man." "I'll say," said Mrs Prokosch. "Oh, that wiggly, squiggly beard." "I guess you spent a lot of time in England", said Peter Luby, detecting. "Did I?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "May I bum one of those Pall Malls? What makes you think that?" "Of course", said Luby, lighting the cigarette. "Well, that's where he lived."

"I like you fellows", said Mrs Prokosch. "I like you male chauvinist pigs. Now, England. Did I go to England? Well, sure, I was there this one time. That was in 1915. Henry James was dying. He wanted Wilson in the war. I don't know where Pound was. I don't think Amy Lowell was there. Gertrude Stein was in Paris, of course. There was nobody around. People say: what do you remember? After all, that was when it was all starting, American literature was starting again, in London. What I remember is absence. I went all over London, and I asked people: 'Is there anybody here in England?' But there wasn't. They were all at the war fighting, or somewhere else. Many of them were somewhere else." "But Shaw was there", said Ethan Elbow. "No", said Mrs Prokosch. "Not at that point. Or maybe he was and I've forgotten." "I see", said Elbow. "Of course there were women there", said Mrs Prokosch. "That was important, the new women feeling. Harriet Monroe, Harriet Weaver, Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Mabel Dodge, Marianne Moore. They weren't all there, of course. But that was the new literature. Shaw knew women were the new literature. That was part of his greatness." "But somewhere, at some time, in some circumstances, you did meet him", said Ethan Elbow, looking sourly into his coffee cup. "We were on terms of the most considerable intimacy", said Mrs Prokosch. "You wouldn't like to tell us the story?" asked Ethan Elbow. "It's somewhat personal", said Mrs Prokosch. "I'll tell you when I'm dead, how's that?" "Oh, Mrs Prokosch, must we wait so long?" asked Dr Halpert. "I don't believe in modesty", said Mrs Prokosch. "I've fought all my life for frankness. But what's a story once it's told? Where's my interest after that?" "But these items you have", said Elbow. "Can you authenticate them?" "The time to tell all is not yet", said Mrs Prokosch. "Not yet is the time to tell all. But I will say this. GBS may have been witty and malicious, but he had a rare capacity for tenderness. *Tenderness*." "My", said Dr Halpert. Mrs Prokosch stubbed out her cigarette on the dinner plate, reached in her very large purse, and took out another photograph.

"LOOK", SHE SAID. "This is one of him in his own garden. You see the tall, handsome lady in the white long dress? Who do you think that is?" Halpert stared at the flouncy flamboyances of the Edwardian photograph, shot in sunshine. His face brightened; he said, "Why, it's *you*, Mrs Prokosch." A snicker broke from Mrs Prokosch's red face; she took back the photograph and handed it to Dennie. "How about that, Dennie?" she said. "Very nice", he said. "Ellen Terry", said Mrs Prokosch. "I thought everyone knew Ellen Terry." Elbow, who could be heard faintly groaning across the table, took the photograph. "A mighty fine lady", said Halpert. "I remember my father sitting on our porch talking about Ellen Terry, when he came back from his European tour." "They all were", said Mrs Prokosch, "GBS loved handsome people. Women with the *élan vital*. Ones who stood up to him. Especially lying down." "Yes", said Dr Halpert. "I see this one's been signed too", said Elbow, "but I can't read the writing." "No", said Mrs Prokosch, "that was his reformed spelling alphabet. He wrote to me mostly in that." "Can you read it to us?" asked Elbow. "I can't read it", said Mrs Prokosch. "It was just a lot of kooky squiggles to me." "So you never understood what he wrote to you?" asked Elbow. "There are other languages than words", said Mrs Prokosch. "So you did meet him?" "All will be explained", said Mrs Prokosch. "Or maybe it will be. It depends how you behave. What do you need to know for, anyway?" "There's an old saying, 'Never look a gift horse in the mouth'", said Halpert.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"But we have to. Otherwise we'd never be able to shut the doors of our library. We have to evaluate and authenticate." Mrs Prokosch's red face laughed; she pushed the photograph back in her purse. "Halpert", she said, "always trust the word of a lady." "Yes", said Dr Halpert. "How else are we going to get our lies listened to?" said Mrs Prokosch. "Other languages than words?" said Elbow. "Oh, yes," said Mrs Prokosch. "You should try them."

"Well, Mrs Prokosch", said Dr Halpert, "you lecture in an hour. Do you wish to lie down, or would you like some brandy in the lounge?" "Why don't we mix it?" said Mrs Prokosch. "I'll lie down with the brandy in the lounge." "Oh, right", said Halpert, waving to the waitress. She came over, a thin, despondent girl: "Well, Leonora", said Halpert, "that was a mighty fine steak you served us." "It was good?" asked the waitress. "Right", said Mrs Prokosch. "But when I say rare I mean rare, if you take my meaning?" "It wasn't good?" said the waitress. "It's okay, not your fault", said Mrs Prokosch. "You just carry the stuff, you don't cook it. Right, stick your arm out, Halpert. You're going to squire me out there."

FILING OUT of the dining room, Dennie noticed that Mrs Schnodd, in her black dress, was standing furtively behind a pillar, gesturing at him. "Excuse me", he said to Ethan Elbow, leaving the line. "If you ask me", said Mrs Schnodd, the pleat in her hair falling down, "this lady ought to be out there in the funny farm." "I'm sorry about Leonora", said Dennie, "but she's a sort of *grande dame*." "Oh, you'd love anything", said Mrs Schnodd. "But I'd just like you to come upstairs and see her room." A certain chaos was apparent even before they reached it; the corridor was filled with furniture. "She had the maid move all this stuff out", said Mrs Schnodd, and she threw open the door. "And how about that?" In the short time since Dennie was last in the apartment, neatness had given way to utter disorder. The trunk stood by the wall, and its contents seemed to have been emptied liberally about the room: books were scattered about, paintings of small size by unknown hands, saucepans, cushions. It must have been the bulk of Mrs Prokosch's wardrobe over a considerable span of years that lay on the bed and on the chairs. In the wastebasket, Dennie's flowers were dumped, and a bright stark light filled the room. "You really think she's staying for one night?" asked Mrs Schnodd. "What happened to the drapes?" asked Dennie. "Oh, those she took down" said Mrs Schnodd. "She told the maid she has to have some more." "Why did she take them down?" asked Dennie. "She said they're transparent, and the students were leaning out of the dorm windows and looking at her in her knickers." "I see", said Dennie. "I just wondered what you were going to do", said Mrs Schnodd, "because I'm out of my little mind."

"Can't we move curtains in from one of the other rooms?" asked Dennie. "They're all the same", said Mrs Schnodd. "It's a uniform scheme of decoration. Or it was." "Do you have measurements?" asked Dennie. "I have thick drapes in my apartment." "I can tell you that", said Mrs Schnodd. "There are seventy-five minutes before the lecture", said Dennie. "Come on, let's go." In the Mercedes, as they drove through the turning paths of the campus, Mrs Schnodd began quietly to cry. "I like the work", she said. "It's a great job. I'm happy. It's just the occasional kook you meet." "That's how it is with these *grandes* old *dames*", said Dennie. "They live in the past." "What's so special about her?" asked Mrs Schnodd. "Well, on the one hand, she was Bernard Shaw's mistress", said Dennie. "And on the other she wasn't." "I don't believe it", said Mrs Schnodd, sniffing. "That great fat terrible flesh." "Perhaps she was wonderful and slim and sexual in her day", said Dennie. "Of course maybe she wasn't." "She acts like she wants to get laid now", said Mrs Schnodd. "How about it, Dennie, for the college?" "No thanks", said Dennie. "Not for the Gutenberg Bible." "You know", said Mrs Schnodd, crying, and putting her arm out straight across Dennie's neck, so that she could lean her head on it. "That steak. It was as rare as they come. Saignant. Bloody." "I believe you", said Dennie. "I know." "I cooked it myself", said Mrs Schnodd. "I told the cook I'd do a real special." "It was great", said Dennie. "It was fine, Mrs Schnodd." "Why don't you call me Pippitt", said Mrs Schnodd.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Fix us a drink, Pippitt, and I'll get these down", said Dennie, when they got to his apartment. "Hey, you're a real aesthete", said Pippitt, looking around. "You're a collector." "I like beautiful things", said Dennie, getting a chair and taking it through into his bedroom. His own curtains were velvet, very favourite curtains; he stood on the chair and unhooked them. "You're a really interesting guy", said Pippitt, coming in. "I brought you a drink." "I'll get it in a minute", said Dennie. Pippitt lay down on the bed and pressed the television selector; the big skinny head and bright teeth of Kojak bobbed on the screen. After a moment she began to cry some more. "I don't understand it", she said, "I don't see what she's trying to do here. But if you think she's leaving tomorrow, you're crazy." "We'll fix it", said Dennie, unhooking the last drape. He got down off the chair and found that Pippitt was standing in front of him with her clothes off, crying and squeezing her nipples with her fingers. "I'm so unhappy", she said. "There's the lecture in less than hour", said Dennie. "I know what you're telling me", said Pippitt. "I know you aesthetes." "It's not that", said Dennie. "It's great work", said Pippitt. "I love it in that place. But then, wham, you get one of these kooks." The tears splashed off Pippitt's face. There were only fifteen minutes left before the lecture when they reached the Faculty Club, and carried the bundled drapes up the stairs. Through the glass doors of the lounge, they could see the dining party gathered together in the club chairs. A despondency was on Halpert's face, but in the middle of the group, Mrs Prokosch, her face very red, laughed with great brightness. "Huh", said Mrs Schnodd, "Will I be glad when she goes home." "Who says she has a home?" said Dennie. The tears began running down Pippitt's face again. "I was just kidding, Pippitt", said Dennie.

"HEY DENNIE", said Mrs Prokosch, when he entered the lounge a moment later. "Where have you been?" "I got some new curtains for your room", said Dennie. "I hear the others were too thin for you." "That's right, Mr Dennie", said Mrs Prokosch, reaching into her brassière and feeling her left breast. "One doesn't usually put an elderly lady in a room overlooked by a student dorm." "I don't think really overlooked", said Halpert. "So you went in my room", said Mrs Prokosch. "Get a good look round?" "No", said Dennie. "Weren't there, were they?" said Mrs Prokosch gleefully. "I'm no fool." "Perhaps we'd better start over to Old Main Chapel", said Halpert. "How about your lecture? Do you need to go upstairs and get notes?" "Notes!" cried Mrs Prokosch, stubbing out a cigarette, "I've given this lecture in hundreds of colleges. All over the world." Halpert, struck by an anxious thought, glanced at Dennie. "You have?" said Halpert. "Well, it's my great pleasure to introduce you. Could you give me your title?" "It's a briefie", said Mrs Prokosch. "*My GBS.*" "My GBS", said Halpert, taking an old scrap of paper from his pocket, and noting this. "And a little biography about yourself?" "I just want you to call me a leading Shavian expert", said Mrs Prokosch. "A shaving expert?" asked Halpert, looking blank. "Shavian is how we adjectivise Shaw", said Ethan Elbow, looking dour. "Mrs Prokosch says she's a leading Shaw expert." "Splendid", said Halpert, "it's a pleasure to have such a distinguished person." "I'll just find the can", said Mrs Prokosch, heaving her great body from the the chair. "And then we can let it roll." "Oh boy, oh, boy", said Elbow, when she'd gone. "This is a real operator." "Is she a fake?" asked Halpert, anxiously. "Maybe we'll know after the lecture", said Elbow. Peter Luby, breathing hard, joined them: he had been sent on ahead to scout the audience. "It's a full house", he said. "We've been hauling them in from the library and the cafeteria and the showers. There are some kids in bathrobes, but I put them on the balcony." "Good thinking", said Halpert.

The door of the ladies' room opened; Mrs Prokosch came out. She had put the interval to good effect: mascara had appeared round her eyes, her nose was thickly powdered, and a large purple scarf was thrown over her white hair and then wrapped around her neck. "How do I look Dennie?" she asked. "Fine," said Dennie. They advanced, the distinguished party, through the foyer, past the desk, where Mrs Schnodd, in her black dress, stood watching them; down the steps, into Halpert's Dodge station wagon,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where, along with two sacks of lawn fertiliser, they fitted comfortably. Mrs Prokosch sat in the front seat next to the President, who drove slowly and solemnly across Campus to Old Main. All along the route, they could see figures flitting in the ill-lit darkness toward the Chapel, and when they got there the entire auditorium of the old building was crowded, ground floor and balcony packed, with students perched, for want of room, on the window sills. In the reserved seats, a group of faculty, alerted several days earlier to their duty, had forsworn their dinner parties and their marking to let their grey hairs glimmer reassuringly in the old chapel roof-lights; there was even a small sprinkling of well-dressed faculty wives, leaning from row to row to report to each other on the neighbourhood pregnancies. The occasion had a solemn, even a reverential air, and Dennie, slipping in on the back row, next to Peter Luby, watched the heads turn as the eminent procession made its way down the aisle and toward the stage: Halpert leading, Mrs Prokosch centre, Elbow in the rear. They mounted the stage; they sat in a row; Halpert stood and made a moderately gracious introduction. Then Mrs Prokosch rose; she went to the central podium, white haired, red face, in the black dress, the purple scarf. "I sing the body electric," she said. "Energy, vitality, biology, the eternal woman." This seemed very solemn, but the audience appeared interested and without malice.

"I want to take you all back to 1914", said Mrs Prokosch, warming, "Everything was happening. Consciousness was exploding. Woman was evolving. The new was about us. Old walls were collapsing. In Chicago, St Louis, New York, Boston, San Francisco, everywhere. Amid this is one wonderful, personal story. It is my story. I am going to tell it to you." Mrs Prokosch leaned forward, in intimacy; Halpert looked uncertain; Elbow looked sullen. "Come with me to a certain New York premiere," said Mrs Prokosch. "The opening night of *Pygmalion*, a new play by Mr George Bernard Shaw. A young beautiful girl, in white, sits in the audience, watching that glittering performance." "Guess who", whispered Luby. "To the core of her soul she is overwhelmed. It has happened at last. The new truth is revealed. She runs up on to the stage. She stands there before that well-dressed audience, clad in their jewels, worth many thousands of dollars. 'We stand at the turning point of the world', she cries. People come from backstage to take her off. 'Let her go', shout those brilliant people. 'She speaks as if inspired.' That girl was me, that occasion my first meeting with Bernard Shaw." "She met him there?" asks Luby. "A spiritual meeting," said Mrs Prokosch. "He had spoken to me, across the wide Atlantic. I knew I must speak to him, tell him who I was, tell him I was the new heroine he wrote of. I wrote a letter, and at that moment began one of the most fascinating correspondences in history." Dennie, looking around, noted that a certain scepticism seemed to have settled on the audience. But now Mrs Prokosch stopped abruptly, and unbuttoned three buttons of her dress. Reaching somewhere inside, with a hand that settled somewhere around her waist, she produced from the interior a thick flutter of paper. "Here it is," she said, sorting through the flutter and plucking out letters she began to read them. There were fond letters and vain letters, letters from Mrs Prokosch; they spoke of the arrant female principle and the need of the new woman for the new man. Mrs Prokosch's face tilted upwards, like some pleading suffragette's, or some early innocent statuary. An occasional curt postcard from Shaw intersected. Now there were passionate letters, erotic letters; they said, I claim you, you shall have me. Halpert, on the stage, solemnly blushed, the red pouring from his neck and into his cheeks. White-haired, red-faced, Mrs Prokosch read on, through the innuendos, the genital references; and, as he stared at her, the strange inhuman biology of the old body before him, the big veined legs, the heavy trunk, the oddity of the seamed old head, the opening lips, the staring eyes, the fanned hair, the entire cellular construct, began moving before him, absurd.

"BUT DID THEY ever lay each other?" whispered Luby. The chapel bell rang the half hour; Mrs Prokosch read on, letter after letter, year after year. When it rang the hour, Mrs Prokosch stopped. "That is the story of me," she said, thrusting the letters back into her sagging big bosom. "Relics." In the amiable applause, Halpert crossed to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her; she took his arm, and they came out through the crowd. "That was mighty interesting," said Halpert, as they drove back across the campus towards the Faculty Club. "It was bloody fabulous," said Mrs Prokosch, breathing hard in the dark. At the Club, they went back into the lounge, and ordered more brandies. "Perhaps", said Halpert, when the drinks came, "we could discuss your. . . ." "Benefaction," said Mrs Prokosch. "That's right," said Halpert. "My mementos," said Mrs Prokosch. "Now, clearly," said Ethan Elbow, leaning forward, "there were many letters from you to him. But are there many of any substance from Shaw to you?" "We were intimate," said Mrs Prokosch. "Do you mind if I ask how?" asked Elbow. "It was wartime, you were on one side of the Atlantic, he was on the other, there were German submarines in between. You say you crossed once, but didn't meet him. It takes remarkable equipment to bridge a gap like that." "He was a superman," said Mrs Prokosch, rising. "I'm tired, I'm going to bed. I've done my service." "Perhaps we could discuss it in the morning," said Halpert. "Are you planning to leave early?" "I don't know when I'm planning to leave," said Mrs Prokosch. "Dennie could bring you over to my office," said Halpert. "Could we say at ten?" "Let's say at ten," said Mrs Prokosch. "I'm a tired old lady. Dennie, bring me to bed." Mrs Prokosch held out her arm; Dennie took it and led her out into the foyer, to the desk, to pick up the key. Mrs Schnodd, in her black dress, stared flatly at him as she handed it over. He led Mrs Prokosch up the carpeted stairs, and to the door of her room.

"Put the lights on for me, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch, when he had unlocked the door. "There we go," said Dennie, "Goodnight." "Draw the drapes," said Mrs Prokosch. When he had pulled them to, he turned, and saw Mrs Prokosch lying on her back on the bed, in her black dress. "All right?" said Dennie. "Put me to bed, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch. "I must go now," said Dennie. "Here's a key," said Mrs Prokosch. "Open the red suitcase." "I ought to go," said Dennie. "Shaw, Shaw," said Mrs Prokosch. "There are two sides to every story." "That's right, Mrs Prokosch," said Dennie. "Open the case," said Mrs Prokosch. Dennie knelt down, and unlocked it. Inside he saw several large girdles, and three bottles of J and B whisky. "There's a tiny bottle in there," said Mrs Prokosch. "Bring it to me." The bottle was in the bottom of the case, under more underclothes: a green glass bottle, in an old style, containing a small quantity of fluid. "You know what that is?" asked Mrs Prokosch. "My memento." "No," said Dennie. "Put me to bed, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch. "The President's expecting me downstairs," said Dennie. "You don't want the letters," said Mrs Prokosch. "You must talk to the President about those," said Dennie. "They're relics," said Mrs Prokosch. "Old things nobody wants." She dipped in her dress, and pulled out the letters; the paper scattered about the bed. Dennie looked. "I'm sure they're of great value," said Dennie. "Maybe I'll just keep them," said Mrs Prokosch. "What could you do with them?" "They'd be used for scholarship," said Dennie. "They'd have historical value." "You know, that's me we're talking about," said Mrs Prokosch. "My body, my sex. You can go to hell, Dennie. So I'm a lump of old meat. This old meat made it with Bernard Shaw." "Yes," said Dennie. "You don't believe me," said Mrs Prokosch. "I never met him, Perry Mason was right. But he wanted me. Circumstances were not in our favour. But we made out." "I don't understand you," said Dennie. "Sit down, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch. "I'll tell you." Dennie sat on the edge of the bed; Mrs Prokosch lay on the bed, the bedside lamp shining on her red face. "He wanted to father on me," she said, "He sent me his seminal fluid. This bottle is his seminal fluid."

"HE SENT THAT?" said Dennie. "You don't understand," said Mrs Prokosch. "We wanted to make a new race then. I had the ideal biology. You don't know about that. You don't know anything, Dennie." "No," said Dennie. "You and your dirty little modern sex," said Mrs Prokosch. "Goodnight," said Dennie. "Here, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch, "I want the furniture changed. Dennie, I want a different room." "I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do," said Dennie. "Goodnight." "Go to hell, Dennie," said Mrs Prokosch, as he pulled the door shut and stood in the corridor. Down in the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lounge, under the lamps, Halpert, Elbow and Luby were sitting, in easy chairs, over another brandy. "Here he is," said Elbow, with a grin. "We were worried about you." "Elbow says she's a spook," said Halpert. "What has she got?" asked Elbow. "Three or four postcards from him to her. The rest is the gush of a sentimental woman. A lady angling for a little place in history." "I doubt if she'll give us anything," said Dennie, "I don't think we've pleased." "That's what I figured," said Halpert. "Give us the letters, how would she get to lecture at the next college in line? For some of these spooks, it's a living." "I suppose one college has to be the end of the line," said Luby. "Why not this one?" "She'll find somewhere that serves her most the way she likes it," said Elbow, grinning. "At least we had the lecture," said Halpert. "That's right," said Elbow. "She speaks like one inspired." "Time for shuteye," said Halpert. "Dennie, bring her over in the morning, if she stays." "Sure, I will," said Dennie, getting up.

WITH NO DRAPES ON his windows, Dennie slept very badly, and woke at five, in discomfort, to find the early morning sun cutting straight into his eyes. He got out of bed, pulled on his bathrobe, and went through into the kitchen to make some coffee. As he was drinking it, the telephone rang. "This is Pippitt," said the voice, "I'm sorry, I didn't have anyone else to call except you." There was a familar note in the voice, and Dennis recognised tears; he said, "Hey there, Pippitt, is there anything wrong?" "That kook," said Pippitt. "I told you she was a kook." "Mrs Prokosch?" asked Dennie. "What's wrong?" "She set her room on fire," said Pippitt. "What do you mean?" asked Dennie. "She burned everything up?" "She burned herself up," said Pippitt. "She's hurt?" asked Dennie. "They took her to the hospital in Amber," said Pippitt. "I called the fire department, and they called the police, and they called a doctor, and he called an ambulance." "Who's there now?" asked Dennie. "The fire chief," said Pippitt. "A cop." "Keep them right there," said Dennie. "I'm coming over." Putting down the phone, Dennie found his body shaking. He pulled on a shirt and pants, and hurried down to his car. Driving across town, between the silent, white-painted houses, he began to groan with a sense of disaster. He groaned for his part in bringing it here, for the letter of invitation, the booking of the room. The big red face, lying on the pillow, in the light of the bedside lamp, took shape in his mind; he groaned for that. The campus was stark and empty, with heavy shadows on it; its peaceable air had slipped, and become absurd. In the plain morning light, the red bricks of the buildings were black, the white wood grotesquely white. The grass was frosted; no one moved. In the lot outside the Faculty Club, there was a firetruck, and a police cruiser. He jumped out of the car, ran up the steps, and went inside.

In the foyer Pippitt Schnodd stood; she was wearing a silky housecoat, and her hair was out of pleat and down her back. She looked pretty and sad. "Dennie, Dennie," she said, "I had to call you." "Of course," said Dennie. "I knew it all the time," she said. "I knew she meant something." "Who found her?" asked Dennie. "Did you?" "No," said Pippitt. "One of the other guests. The emeritus professor from Michigan, he had the next room. But I went in there, it smelled like I can't tell you." "You come in the lounge and make yourself some coffee," said Dennie. "Who's upstairs?" "There's the fire chief and Mr Pulowski from the Police Department," said Pippitt. "You want to go up?" "I have to go up," said Dennie. A hose lay along the corridor leading to the guest room. The door was open. In the room there was a smell as of burned meat. The carpet squelched underfoot. But otherwise the room seemed curiously untouched by the incident.

The bed was badly singed and soaked in water; on it were the charrings of many pieces of paper. Clothes had burned, and a few books. But the red suitcase stood open as he had left it; the goods and the cases stood about the room. "No sweat, Mr Dennie," said the police chief, an elderly man in steel-rimmed spectacles. "It's an open and shut. The lady must have fell asleep smoking a cigarette. There was a pack of Kents on the bedside table. This was a one-night paying guest, right?" "That's right," said Dennie, staring at the charred papers. "Well, you had fire precautions," said the fire officer. "Her garment was one of those old flammable

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cotton nightdresses. Nobody wears them but this is an old lady. Get one of those items ignited, they burn up like paper. You can't play games with fire." "Is she very ill?" asked Dennie. "Well, it's an old lady," said Pulowski. "There's a lot of burning lower down the body. They took her over to Amber, though, that's a hotshot hospital. And the doctor said this lady is a pretty tough cookie." "That's right," said Dennie. "This old guy from Michigan gets in someway and wraps her in a rug," said the fire chief. "That's who she has to thank. He must be seventy himself." Dennie looked round the room again, at the charrings, the stains. He remembered Mrs Prokosch there on the bed the night before, old and enormous, the top of the dress unbuttoned, the big veined legs outstretched. "If you're through," he said. "We'd better get this all tidied up." "We're through," said Pulowski. "There weren't any letters?" asked Dennie. "You mean a note?" asked Pulowski. "No, it's our routine, always look around for a note. This is accidental, no sweat." "I meant old letters," said Dennie. "She came here with a lot of old letters. She'd scattered them all round her on the bed." "That's right, that's what burned up," said the fire chief. "You drop all this paper round you, you light a cigarette, you fall asleep, what else do you expect?"

PULOWSKI CAME and stood near to Dennie. "You saw these papers scattered?" he asked. "You were here last night." "I was probably the last person to see her," said Dennie. "Is the room the way it was when you left?" asked Pulowski. "Not quite," said Dennie. "She'd moved things around a bit." He picked up a photograph from the writing desk, the one they had looked at over the steak: "To my Vera," said the Shavian handwriting. Then, glancing into the waste basket, he saw, next to his dumped flowers, the green glass bottle. "She threw that out," said Dennie. "It's Bernard Shaw's semen." "Maybe I should take that," said Pulowski, opening the bottle and sniffing. "You mean it's come?" "Yes," said Dennie. "I'll test that out, I don't like bottles," said Pulowski. "Bernard Shaw?" "A famous Irish writer called Bernard Shaw," said Dennie. "She had a lot of mementos from the past. She'd said she was going to leave them to the college." "She wanted you to have this guy's come?" asked Pulowski. "I guess that's the intellectual life." "Instead she left you a load of trouble," said the fire chief. "It's a tragedy," said Dennie. "They happen," said Pulowski. They walked out of the room and down the staircase. Outside the club, in the cold fall air, some early-rising students stood, looking at the firetruck and the cruiser. "Okay," said the firechief. "I'll write you a report. Don't worry. The damage is mostly water-damage. Your cover should cover it." "I'll call you if there's anything funny here," said Pulowski. Dennie watched the two vehicles drive off, through the campus. Then he went back, inside the Club. In the lounge, amid the stale smell of last night's cigarette smoke, Pippitt sat in her silky housecoat. She had made coffee in a silver pot; the pot was inscribed with the name of an alumnus who had done internationally well in transistor electronics. Her hair was fanned out loosely round her head; her eyes were puffy. Handing Dennie a cup of coffee, she looked up at him blankly. "Oh, that kook, Dennie," she said. Dennie sat down and stirred the coffee. "It was an accident," he said. "You weren't responsible." "Sure," said Pippitt. "How do you think it is, to have that happen in my Club? Right by where I was sleeping?" "I know," said Dennie. "She came here to do that," said Pippitt.

Dennie looked at her. "No," he said. "It was an accident. She was burning up the letters. We'd riled her, and she didn't want us to have them. She didn't want to leave us anything." "Okay," said Pippitt. "Why move house here? She brought everything. All her stuff, all these things, she brought them here." "I guess she has nowhere to live," said Dennie. "Sure she wanted to leave us something," said Pippitt. "She wanted to leave us her." "I don't believe so," said Dennie. "That's what she told the old guy from Michigan," said Pippitt. "He said, all she said was, 'My benefaction to the college'." "Pippitt, look," said Dennie. "That could mean a hundred different things. I mean, you think about it." "You think about it," said Pippitt. "She came here and you didn't attend to her properly. She was flesh, she insisted." Dennie thought about it. In his hands he found the photograph he had picked up in the bedroom, Shaw and Ellen

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Terry; he turned it over and over. "She wanted to kill herself here," said Pippitt. "In my club. Well, I guess if she dies, she'll be useful for research. You could embalm her and Professor Elbow could shelve her in the library." "You could be right," said Dennie. "Is she going to die?" asked Pippitt. "I can't believe it," said Dennie. "She somehow seems to be biologically eternal. Endless living tissue." "Tissue or not," said Pippitt, "that lady doesn't come back here. I made a rule. I don't look after her." "There have to be relatives somewhere," said Dennie. "I'll have to find out all about that. I'll call the hospital soon." "Oh, you love it, don't you?" said Pippitt, "organising things. What about all that stuff upstairs she left." "Can't you put it away in a closet somewhere for safe-keeping?" asked Dennie. "I guess," said Pippitt. "If you think it will stay there. You look kind of crumpled, Dennie. This is the first time I ever saw you without a clean shirt?" "I'll better go back and clean up," said Dennie, standing up.

Pippitt's hand slid forward, out of the silky housecoat, and held on to his sleeve. "Oh, stay here," she said. "I have to fix things," said Dennie. "And you look like you could use some more sleep." "You think I'd sleep?" asked Pippitt. "I can't even go back up those stairs without you, Dennie." He looked and saw the tears running down the young flesh of her face, along the creases beside her nose, round the red rip of her mouth. "That old woman, that meat burning, I saw her," said Pippitt. "I'm sorry," said Dennie. Dennie looked at the slim, plucked legs, the hard block of the trunk, the sharp, prodded breasts, the wet eyes, the red mouth, the fanned hair, the cells and the tissue. "Don't you like me?" she asked. "You liked me before. Come up with me." He felt the sexual quiver in his loins, that binding grab. "No," he said. He went out through the foyer, down the steps of the Faculty Club, and got into the car.

Ma Jewkes

I was a country boy
And my mother loved me.

The midwife stooked hay
The day she moved me:
There was pollen about her.

The cord with a scythe was cut.

The room and the passage from mother
Were brusquely slammed shut—
And I was held up squealing
Like a pig to the light,
Inverted, lungs congealing
Onto air, eyes squeezed tight.

She washed me; and gave me a hill
Of milk with its nipple spring,
Then tidied her hair with a smile,
And went back to harvesting.

Paul Groves

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

David Holden

Glimpses of the Other India

IT WAS EARLY Sunday morning when we left New Delhi and the usual ghosts were brooding over the barely wakened city. At one end of the deserted Rajpath the vast Greco-Moghul pile of the government buildings rose in misty splendour, dawn-pink and dust-yellow—the imperial acropolis of the British King-Emperors gazing down upon the triumphal way. At the other end, a mile away, the All-India War Memorial was back-lit by the early sun—a dark, self-conscious Arch of Victory erected in tribute to 7,000 sons of India who died defending an empire that was not their own.

We passed between them, travelling south, into the shady avenues that once housed the flower of Britain's imperial manhood in sprawling stucco bungalows with Palladian porches, sweeping gravel drives and lawns big enough for a royal garden party. Once these streets were named after Queen Victoria and her clan but now they recall the lives of older conquerors. We crossed Akbar Road and Aurangzeb and skirted Shahjahan, then drove down Tughlak to reach the tombs of Safdarjang and Humayun and the gardens of Lodi. The names were a litany of lost omnipotence; and on one wide traffic circle I glimpsed, as we sped by, a proper son of India offering what seemed to be his private comment on their evanescent grandeur. An elderly gentleman at his morning yoga was standing on his head in the dew-wet grass, a brief case neatly laid beside him and his dhoti hanging upside down between his withered thighs.

We made our exit from the city down the Grand Trunk Road, that straight, almost Roman highway to the south that bisects the great plain of northern India. Laid down by the Moghuls, resurfaced by the British and now maintained, after a fashion, by the authorities of independent India, it is all-too-plainly another relic of the past. A single, potholed ribbon of tarmac between parallel lines of shade trees, it is almost lost nowadays among the smog and concrete of Delhi's sprawling modern suburbs.

But once you have cut your way through the tangle of bicycles and bullock carts that even at the earliest hour seem to throw a girdle round the city, and honked your way past the last, lurching lorry ("HORN PLEASE!" it says in large letters on the tailboard and "*Ta-Ta!*" in smaller print to salute you as you go by) the road putters off agreeably enough into the vastness of rural India. This is the truly immemorial land, a limitless pattern of brown and green under the winter sun, spreading uniformly in all directions to the characteristic smudge of grey that marks India's winter horizons. At intervals a rocky knoll is raised above the common level of the plain, with a red stone fort on top and a huddle of mud huts plastered about its base. There are regular stabs of white revealing the shrines beneath the banyan trees. There is a stork poised in a ditch and a pair of oxen lumbering down the middle of the road, their heads swinging low and slow in unison beneath gigantic horns. There is a stately group of peacocks arrayed upon a tomb, like a

DAVID HOLDEN, *who is a roving correspondent for the* Sunday Times *(London), writes regularly for* ENCOUNTER. *Among his recent contributions are: "Allende & the Myth Makers" (January 1974), "Ethiopia—Forty Years On" (February 1973) and "Day Trip to Zanzibar" (September 1972).*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moghul painting. Above all, in the great space, there is a persistent stipple of people—men at the plough, women at the well, children splashing in the bright, green scum of the water tanks.

Infinite space and numberless people: the two irreducible elements of India, one as liberating as the other can be oppressive, each holding the other in a permanent, unchanging tension.

AT FIVE MINUTES PAST THREE the next morning the bearer woke me with a steaming cup of sweet, grey tea. "Five-three, sahib!" he announced with sickening cheerfulness, "You take tea?" In my semi-conscious state it took several minutes of mime and pidgin English to explain that five-three was not the same as three-five and that five-thirty, when I had actually asked to be awakened, was something else again. By the time I had finished, sleep had gone for good and for the next two hours I lay listening to the Indian night noises slowly transposing themselves into the sounds of the Indian dawn.

When the village dogs had finished howling and the first tentative sparrow's cheep had taken over from the fading creaks of the garden frogs, the bearer was back again. "Three five, sahib!" he called out this time, "You take tea?" But he had got the clock right, even if the figures were still wrong. It was five-thirty and a band of silver was already visible in the eastern sky. I pulled on two sweaters and a jacket and went outside. The air was still but cold, like an icy pool, and over the trees I could hear a faint, high-pitched multitonal scream, as of many voices raised in ululation. The water-fowl of Bharatpur were waking up, like me, and greeting the new day.

Once upon a time—and that not long ago—Bharatpur was one of the great peaks on every Viceroy's winter shooting schedule. When the pintails and gargany, shovellers and Brahminy duck gathered on the marshes as the monsoon waned and the greylag geese flew in from Siberia with the wintering sun, the knickerbockered rulers of old India assembled, too, for their annual sport. Their marks remain. A stone memorial by one of Bharatpur's many meres records the bags and the guns of more than 60 years. It reads now like a tale of insane slaughter. On a single day in November 1938, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, and a party of 39 guns shot 4,272 duck—over 100 birds per gun. Several other Viceroys and half-a-dozen Maharajahs were not far behind the good Lord's party in their endeavours across the years. What on earth did they do with all the corpses? They must have had enough cold duck to furnish forth the tables of every princely house in India.

Now however—*autre temps, autre moeurs*—Bharatpur is a sanctuary instead of a slaughter-house. Conservation has come to India. A bit late to save the Bengal tiger perhaps, but in good time to keep innumerable duck from the pot and satisfy the world's great new army of bird-watchers. Three hundred and fifty different species of birds have been identified at Bharatpur by now; and with the aid of a sprightly and hawk-eyed guide of 65, who announced proudly that he had served the British as a soldier for 20 years, we contrived to see more than 70 of them in barely three hours, from midgets like the bluethroat to giants like the Sarus crane and no less than three different kinds of eagle. (Not to mention a wild boar, a spotted deer, a mongoose, a jungle cat and half-a-dozen sandy nests of Indian pythons.) Not even Lord Linlithgow could have felt more satisfied with his score as, with the sun now climbing rapidly and the birds dispersing, we peeled off our layers of sweaters and drove back to the dak bungalow for breakfast.

THE DAK BUNGALOW is one of the ubiquitous symbols of an older India that carries on, scarcely altered in any of its essentials, regardless of how times may change in other ways. Originally, it was a post bungalow—a staging house for the dak-wallahs, or postmen, who in the days before mechanised transport used to run ten miles as a standard day's work and 20 miles as a double day over most of British India. But the system was also adapted for the convenience of higher officials so that dak bungalows came to form a convenient network of small, informal resthouses for government officers "on tour"—that most regular and compelling of all the ways that India's erstwhile rulers kept in touch with the ruled.

George Orwell called them "gloomy places smelling of dust and earth-oil" where the officials of British India earned the right "to be a little disagreeable." One sees what he meant. They offer no service, beyond the presence of a chowkidar, or watchman, no luxuries and precious few essentials. Only a gaunt room or two, a few beds (without bedding—you must bring your own) and a stone-floored bathoom where, with luck, you may get a bucket of hot

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

water from the kitchen stove to refresh you at the end of a long and dusty day. But to generations of official India they have been familiar and indispensable homes from home. They still are. From end to end of the sub-continent the Police Superintendent still camps out in them when he's away investigating the latest outbreak of dacoity or the newest village murder. The Agricultural Officer still sleeps there when he's spreading the word among the farmers of the benefits of miracle rice. The District Magistrate still sets up his mobile court on their verandahs with a trestle table and a canvas chair to dispense swift justice to the millions. About the only difference is that they may be joined nowadays by emaciated European hippies who, for the price of a few rupees to the chowkidar, can curl up in dirty blue jeans on the scrubbed floor.

Inevitably, the architecture and condition of the dak bungalows varies with the district. Many have changed in recent years as the motor car has widened the daily range of the officials who use them and reduced the number of bungalows they need. Some have crumbled, others have grown in size and style to accommodate more frequent visitors. In Bharatpur we inhabited a classic example of the north Indian style: a plain, thick-walled, high-ceilinged box of stone, built—as befitted the old Moghul heartland—like a small fort with vast, gloomy rooms big enough to house a full company of soldiers. A giant Victorian sideboard and an equally immense hallstand of some dark-stained wood stood against the walls. Two old French tapestries hung above them, their surface long faded to a uniform, ghostly grey. A dining table that could well have graced a Maharajah's palace and would certainly have seated 40 in perfect comfort was placed at one end of the enormous central room. There our little party sat in tatty grandeur to be fed.

We were only five old friends—a British couple, myself and our Indian hosts—and we were the only occupants of the place except for our accompanying servants. For, of course, to travel in your true, official Indian style, you can't manage without those. Our Indian friends had, in fact, brought all three of theirs from home: a driver and general handyman, a cook and a bearer (although I must say at once that it was not he but the local chowkidar who had wakened me with such misplaced enthusiasm in the middle of the night). These, together with ourselves, and all the food, bedrolls, china, cutlery, cooking-pots, stoves, iceboxes, water-jugs and whisky that were held to be essential to our survival for two or three days away from home, had filled our ancient minibus to bursting; but they had also made us totally independent and enabled us to summon up gargantuan and elaborate meals in the most unlikely situations. We had already had a "picnic" on the way from Delhi which, served to us on rugs in a roadside orchard, had turned out to be a slap-up feast of hot tandoori chicken, curried eggs and vegetables, fruit and home-made chutneys and sauces served from plastic bags. Now, for breakfast after our bird-watching morning the servants surpassed that with ease. Laying the table with our hosts' best china and silver, they served in steady and satisfying succession: wheat porridge with cream, in silver-lined bowls of camphorwood, puffed rice cakes with curried onions and potatoes, bacon and eggs, toast, marmalade, tea and fruit. Hungry, we ate the lot—I fear, without a thought for the starving millions who might have been just beyond the door.

THIS NEO-IMPERIAL STYLE of travel continued as we trundled with our servants and our paraphernalia for the rest of that day around the relics of Moghul India. At Fatehpur Sikri—next to the Taj Mahal probably the most famous

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and certainly the most substantial of all the Moghul monuments—we shared the dak bungalow with the District Magistrate who had arrived that same morning. It was an altogether more imposing place than Bharatpur's: a sturdy country house of sandstone, quite fit for a gentleman's residence or a minor Maharajah's *pied à terre*, and surrounded by well-kept gardens where canna lilies and verbena flowered for the delight of tiny sunbirds and exotic yellow-and purple butterflies. The District Magistrate sat at his little table on the lawn beneath a shade tree, in white shirt and trousers, surrounded by his clerk, two policemen and a score of petitioners and minor miscreants—a microcosmic image of the lingering administrative style of the British Raj.

But it was at Agra and the Taj Mahal itself that, most appropriately, we reached the apogee of our somewhat stately progress. It was the night before full moon and the Taj was open to the world. I had seen it once before, some ten years earlier, at the crack of dawn when it had materialised astonishingly before my eyes, swimming and shimmering out of a thick, pearly fog as if some genie had rubbed a giant lamp, to stand clear at last in a dewy brightness that felt like the morning of the world. I thought then that I had never seen anything more beautiful; and this time I feared I could not hope for a matching experience. Ten years on, ten years more blasé, the idea of the Taj by moonlight seemed just another tourist cliché.

The first tour parties had, indeed, arrived by the time we got there and the car park and the entrance gate were packed with buses and chattering schoolgirls. Somewhere nearby a Hari Krishna group was clashing cymbals and raising a loud, discordant chant. "*Hari Krishna! Hari Om! Hari Krishna! Hari Om!*" It sounded like a bad record that had been stuck in the same groove ever since it was made and was now well on the way to being totally worn out. But when I walked through the great doorway that leads into the garden before the tomb, the Taj cast its spell as thoroughly as before. The moonlight was no cliché, after all: it was magic. It fell upon the great white bulb of the dome with a radiance that was almost tangible, as if marble was striking soundlessly upon marble. At first a little night mist around the base made the dome seem to float, like a giant echo of the moon itself. Then it cleared and the firm geometry of the tomb's structure—the solid cube of the pediment in shadow and the soaring, illuminated lines of the minarets on either side enclosing the full sphere of the dome—imposed a mathematical clarity on the night. It was a statement of the absolute that reduced even the schoolgirls to whispers.

Inside, under the echoing roof, a resident guide was sounding the first syllables of the Muslim call to prayer to demonstrate the resonance of the building. "*Allahu Akhbar*!" he cried, throwing his head back and expelling a powerful, piercing high-pitched jet of sound. "*Allahu Akhbar*!" came the roof's reply. Impressed, a few children began to echo him, too, so that soon the whole place was ringing with the cry of the faithful. Then, to one side, another sound began. A murmuring and uncertain bass at first, joined by muted tenor voices and slowly swelling in confidence and volume until it was recognisable as a full-blown Gregorian plain-chant.

It came from a huddle of men in woolly hats and those curiously plastic-looking shoes that seem to be one of the distinguishing marks of the modern Russian wardrobe. They were, it turned out, a group from Soviet Armenia on an Indian holiday; and from their rapt expressions as they felt their way into the chant and wove their voices around the echoes from the marble walls, their impromptu concert in the Taj must have been the ceremonial pinnacle of their trip.

Our own little climactic ceremony, though, was performed outside. In a corner of the garden our trusty servants had been at work again, laying out yet another of their unexpected feasts. Rugs covered the now-damp grass and a clean, embroidered tablecloth was laid with a substantial picnic, this time in the English style—ham and salami, boiled eggs, fruit and cheese, and a large pot of English mustard. Once more we ate, with our three guardians smiling over us while the Taj loomed huge in the moonlight like a silver ghost. At that moment, it seemed, Moghul India might never have departed.

AN HOUR LATER I said goodbye to all that and, leaving my friends to spend the night in still another dak bungalow, I went off alone to catch the Howrah Mail. Among railway enthusiasts that name will, no doubt, evoke at once all the romance of the great Indian railway system—and I must confess that I was not immune to its appeal myself. I like railways; and I am old enough to have travelled on the old Flying Scotsman behind a thundering Gresley Pacific, and to have nursed a bourbon in the club car of the Twentieth

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Century Limited as it wailed its way across the cornlands of America's Middle West. The Howrah Mail may not be quite in that class but the name has a fine, nostalgic Kiplingesque ring about it and I felt an authentic twinge of excitement when I went in Delhi to book my sleeping-berth from Agra to Calcutta.

I should have realised then, though, that the romantic promise was a snare and a delusion. For one thing, I discovered that among the officials of Indian Railways the train was rarely known by its name: it was just the plain 'Twelve Down." For another, it didn't actually pass through Agra on its way to Calcutta: I had to catch it at a place called Tundla Junction, more than 20 miles away—an enterprise that seemed likely to be less than entertaining at one o'clock of a winter morning. Moreover, my needs caused the booking clerks a suspicious amount of bother, for they were rather more complicated than a straightforward reservation from point to point. I wanted to break my journey for a day at another rural station some seven hours down the line from Tundla, then catch another night train on to Howrah, the Calcutta terminus. There was something about the way the clerks asked me to spell out this request that suggested I was being a glutton for punishment and at the end of a whole, precious afternoon of queueing and form-filling I had indeed concluded that I was. But pride and sentiment as well as conscience do make cowards and all three had pricked me on until I found myself now, at midnight, half-frozen in an open jeep, bucketing across the plain from Agra to Tundla in gloomy expectation of the worst.

The appearance of the junction did nothing to reassure me. The platform looked like a ghostly battlefield under the moon, strewn with a thousand shrouded corpses and the seeming rubbish of a routed army.

Closer inspection revealed that the corpses were actually alive and that the piles of litter around them were all their worldly goods—bundles of rags and blankets, battered tin boxes, bursting canvas sacks and tangled heaps of blackened cooking pots tied together with string. Here and there a few bodies sat up to watch me as I picked my way through, great eyes staring out of moon-dark shadows, but most of them lay motionless or stirred only enough to pull their shrouds tighter about themselves with thin, brown hands.

The booking office that looked out upon this macabre scene was chillingly reminiscent of the darkest days of railway travel in wartime Britain and the first-class waiting-room next door, in which I was invited to await the train, was unlit and crowded with still more bodies, each of them —to judge from the steady chorus of coughs and hacks and spits—in the final stages of galloping consumption. I settled down among them in the melancholy conviction that no train would ever come.

But India is nothing if not full of surprises. The train came, all right, within five minutes of its appointed time, and there on a sheet of paper by the door of one of the first-class coaches I found my name pencilled among a score of others, just as it might have been on the sleeping car at Euston. I was impressed as well as relieved. All those hours in Delhi of queueing and explaining, ticketing and docketing, had evidently not been in vain. India worked—or at any rate Indian Railways did—and with a mental cry of Eureka! I climbed aboard.

WHAT HAD NOT WORKED, I discovered, were my own preparations for the journey. In booking a first-class sleeper I thought I had done all I could to ensure my well-being. A comfortable berth, clean sheets, perhaps even a cup of tea from the steward in the morning: that, in my

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

innocence, was what I expected. Nobody had told me that for service like that Indian Railways have added one more rung to the ladder of class discrimination. It is called "air-conditioned" and is restricted to only a few of the very best and fastest trains.

My sturdy old "Twelve Down" was not among them. My berth was a hard and dusty leatherette bench, let down just under the carriage roof, my steward—if, indeed, he existed—was not to be found and there was not a scrap of bedding to be seen. Moreover, I had no sooner scrambled up to my perch than the rest of the compartment was comprehensively taken over by a family who appeared to be moving house by the simple expedient of bringing it with them on the train. Father, mother and four children, they heaved, hauled and pushed through the door a seemingly inexhaustible series of packages until they had filled the cramped space almost as thoroughly as the Marx Brothers filled the ship's cabin in that famous scene in *A Night at the Opera*. I sat hunched under the roof on my little bench and watched them. Half-a-dozen hessian-covered suitcases there—very neat. Four more here—just so. Four enormous canvas bedrolls, bulging with blankets. Three large cardboard boxes bound with string. An immense piece of sacking, about the size of a large tent, pulled roughly together around the family's kitchen equipment. Several assorted satchels, carrier-bags and thermos flasks and two woolly overcoats they had been unable to pack away.

The tide of goods and chattels rose steadily until it lapped against my dangling feet. I decided I had better get out to the toilet before I was unable to move at all and in trying to find a vacant inch of floor on which to put my foot as I descended I became entangled in the canvas sacking. Pots and pans sprang out like live things and bounced about the corridor. Father and I chased them, bowing politely to each other, while mother stuffed them back into the sack again and the children perched like wide-eyed Buddhas on suitcases above the wrack.

The toilet was filthy and by the time I returned the family had somehow disposed itself among its mountain of possessions and was already dropping off to sleep. I fought my way back up again to my berth and lay down, blanket-less, to await the dawn. As the train rumbled on through the night, stopping now and then at other unseen country junctions, I lay dozing and trembling with cold and thought of all those other bodies I had left behind at Tundla—a sight that was being repeated over and over again, no doubt, outside the tightly shuttered window of the carriage every time we stopped. In India one man's momentary discomfort is the unimaginable luxury of tens of millions. It was not exactly a pleasant thought but it helped to make the shivering more bearable.

A PUBLIC HOLIDAY had begun in the little town where I stepped off the train a few hours later, but a message had got through to announce my impending arrival and two officials awaited me on the platform to escort me to the seat of local power. It was, inevitably, the office of the District Magistrate.

He was a cheerful, bright young man in shirt sleeves sitting at a vast, well-worn desk that had obviously been the symbol of authority in these parts for at least a century. Briskly, he filled me in on the facts about his district and organised my day for me. "One-and-a-half million people," he said, "35 per cent Muslim, 60 per cent Hindu, 5 per cent odds and sods. Not rich, but not absolutely poor—typical, really of most of North India. Any questions? Right. Next you will see the Agricultural Officer, the local Member of the State Legislative Assembly and the Police Superintendent. Right? Lunch—you will be taken care of by our friends." He gestured at the local agent of the Congress Party who was sitting at my side. "This afternoon we have arranged a duck shoot, for the holiday, you understand? Tonight. . . ." But tonight, I interrupted, I had to be on the train again to Calcutta, or my schedule would be hopelessly out of joint.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The District Magistrate was only momentarily nonplussed. "I'll see to that," he said, and in a swift series of calls on an old, wind-up telephone, he cancelled my train reservation, booked me on a flight to Calcutta from Kanpur the following morning ("Well get somebody else off if you have to—*make* room for him" he said impatiently) and arranged a jeep at dawn to take me the 60 miles to the airport. "How's that?" he asked, spreading out his arms and beaming like a conjurer who has just put the sawn-up girl together again. I was delighted, as much at avoiding another night on the train as at the prospect of actually witnessing some sort of latter-day Indian version of the old Vice-regal shooting party at Bharatpur. And besides, I had been given an apt demonstration of how India really worked. It didn't look much different from the way it had worked long before —through the imperial bureaucracy under another name.

AT LUNCH I DISCUSSED the shooting prospects with the former Nawab of the district, a wizened little gentleman in a crumpled white dhoti and a darned brown pullover, who turned out to be the Congress agent's elder brother. Yes, indeed, he remembered many good duck shoots in the old days—a hundred, two hundred birds at a time. "Of course, we had you British here then. Officers, you know. We were all good friends." But he was a bit old for that sort of thing nowadays and, anyway, there was enough to do keeping body and soul together the way things were. The family lands had gone, all except the permitted holding of 18 acres, and they had to live now on just a little legal business and the proceeds of the Saturday cattle and donkey market in the town. They still had the rights to that and it brought in a bit of money.

But evidently not much. The house—though little bigger, as far as I could see, than an old English country rectory—was plainly in that condition described by estate agents as "in need of renovation." The walls were stained with damp, the woodwork was blistered, and some of the guttering had fallen away. At the entrance gate a small, battered mosque, covered with lichen and sprouting healthy young shrubs from several cracks in its walls, stood guard over what had once been a garden and was now a beaten yard of earth with a tangle of old rose-bushes, lilies and creepers to one side.

At one end of the house some renovation was actually in progress: a loggia, my hosts explained, was being added so that the family could sit in the shade and catch the breezes that blew up from the fields below. It was a ramshackle, unfinished balcony of soft brick, poised precariously on the edge of a bluff. Below lay a dried-up moat, with chickens pecking about among some refuse. Beyond that were fields and the clustered mud huts of the little town.

The ex-Nawab shared this property with his brother and after the three of us had finished our all-male lunch and washed our greasy hands with a kettle of cold water and a tin bowl on the steps outside, the two families arrived from the back quarters to join the shooting party. There were two large, middle-aged ladies in saris, a couple of small boys and a gaggle of pretty girls.

We were just piling into a car sent for us by the District Magistrate when the ex-Nawab, standing wistfully in the doorway, sent one of the boys to fetch a letter he thought I would like to see. It was actually a printed form, a little yellow at the edges and dirty in the folds, but it was headed "GOVERNOR'S MANSION, UNITED PROVINCES", and said in bold, treble-spaced print:

My dear Nawab Sahib,
I have pleasure in informing you that you have been confirmed in the style and title of
NAWAB
previously held by your father.
Yours sincerely,

. . . and there followed an illegible signature that was identified below as that of the Governor's Secretary. "You see the date?" the old man asked with a wry little grin. "April, 1947. Four months later you British left and my title went with you. When I look back now it's like a dream. . . ."

OUR PARTY ASSEMBLED at the police superintendent's house. There was the superintendent himself, a dark and rather withdrawn young man who seemed ill at ease in the company he had to keep. There was the District Magistrate, as bright and breezy in his social life as he was in his office, noisily involving everyone in solving the *Times of India* crossword. There was a small, wiry and unmistakably military gentleman with a toothbrush moustache and a soldier's khaki sweater who turned out to be a retired Brigadier of the Indian Army, and another, younger, man in military fatigues and a jungle hat who proved to be his brother. There was an elderly, saturnine little hawk of a man who was a local lawyer; and, besides our party from the ex-Nawab's house, there was an assortment of unidentified

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wives, children, servants and policemen who were to bring up the rear, provide help and protection and supervise what I now recognised as the inevitable accompaniment of any Indian outing—the transport of a small mountain of food, rugs, tables, chairs and what appeared to be the entire contents of several family kitchens. Altogether a representative cross-section of the Indian rural establishment—the squirearchy, so to speak, and its bureaucratic allies and minions—on the move.

It was mid-afternoon before we reached the river and saw ourselves and our baggage train safely stowed aboard a couple of barges and an old ferry-boat that had been lashed together abreast and moored on a convenient sandbank. The rugs were disposed over the decks, awnings were spread above us, and the servants got to work with primus stoves and handed round cups of tea. There was not a duck in sight.

Slowly our cumbersome vessels chugged upstream, wandering from side to side of the broad, muddy waters between low, sandy banks. The District Magistrate was now deep in a game of chess with the Congress Party agent and, from his satisfied shouts of laughter, having much the better of it. At last, a long way off, someone sighted a few dots in the sky and proclaimed them to be pintails and the rest of the men set off in pursuit in a rowing boat. The dots disappeared again, but nearer to us, on another sandbank, we saw a few yellow-and-white creatures squatting at the water's edge. "Brahminys," said the brigadier's brother. "Cunning buggers. We'll never get near them."

Nor did we. They were gone long before we were in gunshot range and we squelched ashore in the mud, barefoot, to see what else might turn up.

Tracks showed that just about everything, from sandpipers to storks, had been there recently, but the duck remained elusive. Now and again more pintails appeared, going fast and high, and the police superintendent, who had wandered darkly away alone, blazed off several barrels in their general direction without effect. The others sniffed—"He's not really used to this", said one of them. "Came up from—well, nowhere really. You know?" They were obviously hoarding their ammunition. "Got to", said the brigadier. "My last English cartridges. Know what they cost? Seven rupees each. *Each*, my dear sir! What's that in English money? Ten bob?" Not far off—about 40p.—I said. "There you are. At that rate you can't afford to miss."

But, I said innocently, Indian cartridges must be cheaper: why use imported ones? "Ah," said the brigadier's brother, "you don't know. You don't know. You don't know the longing we have for imported goods. These Indian cartridges now",—he pulled a handful from his pocket—"they spoil the barrel. Why? Because they are cheap, sir, cheap and shoddy. Like everything else we make, there's no pride in them." Unwittingly I had opened the floodgates of sentiment as well as bitterness, because he went on. "Now your British workmanship, I must tell you, my dear sir, it is of the very best. The very best. One hundred per cent, A1, first class!"

I said it was nice to hear that again, not many people seemed to think so any more. "No, no, I don't say it for you, my dear sir. I say it because it's true. With British goods you get your money's worth. One hundred per cent, A1, first class!" He extended his gun to me. "Look at this gun, sir. A very old gun. But you see it is BSA—*BSA*. Forty years ago I paid 250 rupees for it. Now I would not sell it for 5,000. That is what we think of British workmanship."

I mentioned an acquaintance of mine in London who had sold an old gun recently for as much as £2,000. It was, I thought, a Purdey—would that be right? The name brought a look of worship to the three faces around me. "A Purdey!" barked the brigadier. "By George!"

"Best gun in the world, my dear sir," said his brother, "bar none." The hawk-like lawyer nodded silently for a moment, then sucked in his breath and sighed sadly but devoutly, as a rich man might at the sight of the gates of heaven: "I wonder what that would have cost here?"

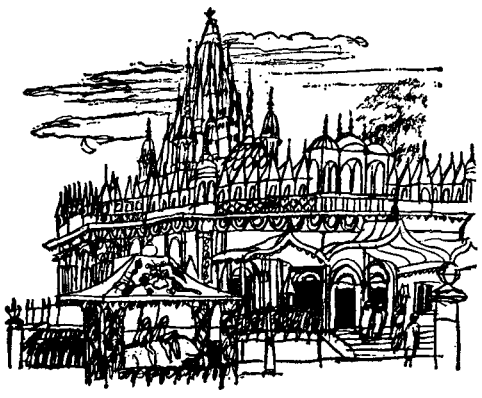
BY NOW THE SUN was setting down-river behind a silhouette of far-off trees and the water was a blaze of reflected fire. A big spotted kingfisher was hovering close by, looking for the last catch of the day. A pair of curlew flew over, whistling, and the police superintendent let off one more vain right-and-left at some barely visible duck heading up-stream towards the rising moon. As the echoes of his final shot died away there was a moment of total stillness, as if we were all holding our breath for a few seconds waiting for the sun to fall, sizzling, into the orange water and the moon to go floating up in its place like a huge, illuminated scoop of vanilla ice. Then, breaking the spell, there came a cry from across the water. Our barge was calling,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dinner was nearly ready, we should be on our way. Still duck-less, we squelched back to our little rowing boat and were paddled across the river.

The District Magistrate was waiting for us to start a game of bridge. "I'd like to be a tournament player, you know", he announced as he dealt the first hand. "Like that Egyptian film actor, Omar Sharif. Makes a fortune, a bloody fortune." The hurricane lamps were hissing and a million moths and mayflies were bashing themselves to death around us. "Well," I said, "you couldn't do worse at that than we've just done at duck-shooting. Not a feather between us.'

"Ha!" said the brigadier's brother. "Two no trumps. And next time you come, for God's sake remember to bring some British cartridges with you."



LIKE THE EX-NAWAB and his brother, the Congress Party agent, the brigadier and his brother shared a house in the little town. There, at the end of the day, I was taken to find a bed. The family, they told me, had once been wazirs to the Nawabs—roughly, I suppose, their administrative secretaries—and over the centuries they had obviously done tolerably well out of their position. As we came through the gates I saw the house lit by the moon—a big, square, two-storied box of stone and stucco with a line of fancy Moghul battlements round the roof and a row of 20-foot columns at ground level forming a deep loggia round three sides. It was in much better order than the ex-Nawab's place, reflecting, I fancied, the impact of some military discipline upon the servants as well as the traditional administrative skills of an old, executive family.

Inside, the military flavour was unmistakable—more like an officers' club than a home. There was a room-full of shooting trophies dominated by a massive, mounted tiger's head. A tiger skin stretched from wall to wall in the hall and three more tiger skins hung on the walls of the main sitting room. Going closer to admire them I noticed on each one a fine network of cobwebs stretching from nose to paws: perhaps the military discipline wasn't so tight, after all? The brigadier's brother, however, was oblivious. "All shot by my father", he said, pointing to a large photograph of an old gentleman in a turban and military uniform. "Lived to be 94. You did him the honour of awarding him CBE."

The decoration was there, in a glass case with other medals, in front of a group of silver sporting cups. "You must see his library", the brother continued, ushering me into another room. "You see? Shakespeare, Gibbon, Dickens, Shaw—he was very keen on Shaw." Solemnly we went round the glass-fronted bookcases, each with its load of that distant culture that still evidently dominated the life of the cobwebbed house. Charles Morgan, Vicki Baum, Lytton Strachey, Dorothy Sayers, James Jeans on the Mystery of the Universe, H. G. Wells on the History of the World. There was even one case filled with nothing but Reader's Union novels from between the Wars. It was popular literary England preserved from 40 or 50 years ago, a deep well of nostalgia and a spur to reminiscence.

"Tell me," said the brigadier, as he handed me a whisky and pulled out a battered, cherry-wood pipe, "how much does a good Dunhill pipe cost nowadays? Does Veeraswamy's restaurant still exist?" We were off—over memories of London, the Army, the War, the Queen: "D'you know, peasants went all the way from here to Delhi, when she came to India, just to catch a glimpse of her in the flesh?" I said I supposed that was because a Queen was always a glamorous figure, but the brigadier thought it was something more. "You see," he said, between fierce pulls at his bubbling pipe, "what you don't realise is that people here respected the British. You had standards and you kept to them. How do you think you ran this country for so long? By setting your standards and by sticking to them. Now, well, if you'll permit me to say so, my dear sir, I don't quite understand what's happening to you—we read so many things—but, well, you don't seem to have standards any more." There was a long, dying pause while I wondered vainly what reply to make. Then he stood up to pour

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out one last finger of whisky. "Yes, it was better, really, when people knew where they were and what they had to do. Now—well, you see for yourself." He threw out an arm that metaphorically embraced all India and Britain, too. "I don't say it's all bad, mind you, but it's not what we were used to."

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE DREAMED that night of past greatness and vanished honour. But I didn't, perhaps because for the third night running I didn't actually sleep much at all.

The village dogs were howling most of the night and twice I heard the house chowkidar going his rounds—as I had been warned he would—and ringing his little bell at intervals to prove that he was awake. By the time dawn and the District Magistrate's jeep arrived I was anxious to be up again to escape the weary agony of wakefulness. It was cold outside, as usual, but the brigadier's brother had got up in his dressing gown to see me off. "Yes," he said, as we shook hands, almost as if our conversation of a few hours' earlier had not been interrupted. "Yours was a great country. You have much to be proud of."

"Thanks," I said. "I hope we'll be able to live up to that." And I drove off into another fast-lightening morning on my way to Calcutta.

Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses have been, and gone;
Their steel rims flashing in the sun.

Some sixth sense warned me to remain
Under cover, till I had seen.

Who was at the door. They were
Persuasive as ever: "Prepare

To act on the good news." "Can you envisage
A future without God?" "It is our privilege

To invite you to partake of His banquet. . . ."
Our upstairs neighbour, firm but discreet,

Closes the door. Father of two young children,
Mine is a different desperation.

I sit tight in my sense of sin.
Their dark figures diminish, in the sun.

Stewart Conn

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Wain

Poetry & Social Criticism

Should Poets try to change the world

I WANT TO MAKE this essay an exercise in ground-clearing. There cannot ever have been a subject about which so many contradictory opinions are expressed as this of the social involvement of imaginative art; and, though my brief is about poetry, most of the conclusions I have come to could be equally well applied to painting, or the theatre or prose fiction (even, with some adjustments, to music, in so far as music gets dragged into this kind of *imbroglio* at all). The area within which I would like to tidy up can be indicated by these questions:

Is there anything in the nature of a moral obligation on the poet to convey opinions *in his work* about the sickness or health of the society he finds himself living in?

In the major poetry of our tradition, has social criticism been a preponderant theme or has it taken its place as one theme among many?

In responding to poetry which overtly sets out to make social judgments, ought we to apply any specialised criteria, or do we just approach it as poetry like any other?

And, most flatly of all; can poetry ever be straight propaganda? or, if you prefer—can straight propaganda ever be poetry?

All of us who write are familiar with the person who comes up to us, on an average about once every three weeks in some shape and size, and asks, "Why don't you use your writing to strive for a better world?" His (or her) tone will suggest, with a flavour of accusation, that the writer is heartlessly frivolous, or perhaps cynical, to leave so obvious a duty undone. A writer, with the power to attract people's attention, to engage their feelings, to channel their emotions in this and that direction—surely a writer, of all people, ought to put on shining armour and slay the dragon. The dragon, of course, always turns out to be the easily identified villain of whatever mythology the questioner has embraced. Capitalism, imperialism, racism, fascism, discrimination of all kinds—there is no shortage of dragons, wearing conspicuous labels. And if one hesitates to dismantle one's art and rebuild it as a missile-launcher, the hesitation does not necessarily stem from any complacency about the world as it is. Personally I am just as convinced as anyone that human society ought to be changed; its cruelty and cynicism appal me; its greed and competitiveness and prodigality leave me saddened; its ugliness affronts me. And the misbehaviour of mankind is all the more horrible in that it takes place on such a beautiful planet as the earth. We are like a lot of delinquent children who break into a handsome house, full of fine furniture assembled with love and good taste, and proceed to relieve ourselves all over it. Yes, I agree that the world should be changed! But are the imaginative arts the most suitable instrument for bringing this change about? If you use a razor to chop wood, don't you end up with very little wood and a spoilt razor, no longer any use for its real purpose?

I am quite aware that the dedicated political activist will answer at once, *so much the worse for art*. To such minds, nothing matters except the struggle to change the world: indeed, to let anything else matter, to give attention to personal relationships or undirected art or the beauty of nature or abstract intellectual questions, is merely immoral. It is easy to feel small in the presence of such single-mindedness. On the other hand, the single vision is usually a tunnel vision: it achieves its clarity at the cost of a Draconian exclusiveness. To see a single set of issues with such intense clarity is usually a sign that there are other issues one is wilfully not seeing. And here comes the fundamental split. The narrow, fiercely directed vision of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolutionary, or for that matter of the mystic or the martyr, is entirely different from, entirely irreconcilable with, the temperament that produces art. (*So much the worse for art!* again.) But so much the better for it too, in view of the rich and contradictory nature of human experience. "Why don't you face facts?" someone asked E. M. Forster. "How can I", he replied, "when they're all round me?"

LOUIS MACNEICE, in his book on Yeats, had some wise words to say about poetry and propaganda, writing at a time when the claims of propaganda were being pressed as they are today.

> The propaganda poets claim to be realists—a claim which can only be correct if realism is identical with pragmatism. Truth, whether poetic or scientific, tends as often as not to be neither simple nor easily intelligible, whereas the propagandist is bound by his function to give his particular public something that they can easily swallow and digest. Realism, in the proper sense of the word, takes account of facts regardless of their propaganda value and records not only those facts which suit one particular public but also those facts which suit another public and even those facts which suit no one. The propagandist may have his "truth" but it is not the truth of the scientist or of the realist; it is even further removed from these than poetic truth is. He is only interested in changing the world; any use of words therefore which will lead to that end—lies, distortions, or outrageous over-simplifications—will, from his point of view, be true. This again is a tenable position but it does not prove either that the poet will write better poetry by substituting propagandist truth for poetic truth or even that it is the poet's duty as a man to write propaganda poetry. Even if the poet believes in the *end* of the propagandist he can have legitimate doubts whether that end will be in the long run usefully served by a prostitution of poetry. Poetry is to some extent, like mathematics, an autotelic activity; if bad poetry or bad mathematics is going to further a good cause, let us leave this useful abuse of these arts to people who are not mathematicians or poets.

So coolly and so cogently argued, the case would be seen to carry itself. But there are very powerful magnets pulling in the other direction. A good many writers, like a good many people of every kind, have found themselves, at some stage in their lives, participating in some activist movement or other. The hankering for corporate action, for shared ideals, shared burdens, shared discipline and danger, comes over most people at times. In the particular case of the writer, there are some causes that make him particularly vulnerable.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, a writer's life is lonely. If he gets on with his work without the nuisance of other people, he is also deprived of their comfort and support. After a number of years in the trade, most people manage to come to terms with this loneliness, but it is particularly hard to bear for young writers, who are in consequence always forming groups, and issuing manifestos, and gathering in excited bunches. Often, this impulse takes a political turn, and then the young writer has the delicious heady sensation of being wanted. "We need you. Our point of view should be stated by someone like you with a gift for words."

This kind of invitation is music in a young writer's ears, and virtually the only way for him to hear it is to join a group who are pushing towards some pre-defined objective. Otherwise, however well he writes, nobody will claim him, and young writers want to be claimed. Such group solidarity will, necessarily, lead him often into solemn fatuity.[1]

But the risk of fatuity is, to some, easier to take than the certainty of loneliness. The subject-matter of art is, necessarily, as generalised as the scope of human experience itself. Poetry is about life, death, love, hate, heaven, hell, immortality, joy and pain. But these things are everybody's concern: and what is everybody's concern can often seem like nobody's concern. Whereas, if he writes a poem arguing fiercely that the Palestinian people must have their rights, or Basque militants be let out of prison, or the British Army must get out of/stay in Northern Ireland, he will find himself addressing a large, ready-made sector of the public who are looking for someone to say just *that*. And he will be welcomed, and fêted. It is all an illusion, of course. The welcome will turn to suspicion, the cordiality to venom, as soon as he deserts the narrow path of that particular subject-matter and goes back to his real work of writing about unfenced-in human experience. Then he will find out what it is like to try to get down from a tiger's back. But till that moment comes, the ride can be very exhilarating.

Then again there is the grudging tribute of envy that practical, demonstrable action always receives from those bound to the desk or the

[1] All my life I seem to have been opening magazines and books of poetry and finding solemn fatuities based on political attitudes. In the nineteen-forties, I promise you, someone actually perpetrated the couplet:

Bare, bitter with the truth, not posed, not slick,
Here's verse that's more than good, it's Bolshevik.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

easel. I always sympathise with the writer, whoever it was (it was Augustus Birrell who told the story), who attended a court sitting, and at the end of the morning's business remarked ruefully, "When that judge sentences some poor devil to go to prison for five years, he goes. But when I publish a book, nothing happens!" In view of the sheer number of things that have happened because books were published, this attitude seems to me unrealistic. Anything that involves people's thoughts and feelings must surely accomplish more in the way of results than the pronouncements of a bewigged and ermined figure who is merely implementing the law that has been established as much by the writing of books as by anything else. But the attitude, understandably, persists, as witness Auden's lines in the elegy on Yeats.

> *For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives*
> *In the valley of its saying where executives*
> *Would never want to tamper; it flows south*
> *From ranches of isolation and busy griefs,*
> *Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,*
> *A way of happening, a mouth.*

I find those lines memorable and somehow comforting, but they contain a number of statements that seem to me untrue: To begin with, executives (party bosses, for instance) very definitely claim the right to "tamper" with poetry if it seems likely to talk back to them; and by that tampering they tacitly admit that "the valley of its saying" is a valley along which important rivers may flow—perhaps that same "peasant river" that was "untempted by the fashionable quays" earlier on in the same poem. And if poetry, and all art, survives mainly as "a mouth", a mouth is useful not only for making noises but for receiving nourishment.

Still, the point is that the writer, particularly the young writer, doesn't *feel* as if anything happened when he publishes his thoughts; they don't seem anything like actions. Hence the almost irresistible pull of activism to the literary temperament, the kind of thing we read about in Renee Winegarten's fascinating *Writers and Revolution*, aptly subtitled "The fatal lure of action".[2] One of Mrs Winegarten's prize exhibits is Baudelaire. His view of the human condition, that its ills were totally incurable, that the human animal was only at home in a jungle full of cruelty and ferocity, and that the beauty of life was to be found in the strange and lurid flowers that grew out of this evil, and nowhere else—this view would surely inoculate anyone against the temptation to participate in schemes for the radical change of society. Yet Baudelaire was seen by friends, during the rising of 1848, among a crowd that had just looted a gunsmith's shop, waving a gun and shouting slogans with the best of them.

I am equally fascinated by some examples that do not find their way into Mrs Winegarten's muster. When the Spanish people rose against Ferdinand VII and the Inquisition, well-wishers in England raised a sum of money to help them, and two young Cambridge men carried this money to a secret rendezvous in the Pyrenees, to hand it over to the rebel leaders. The two young Cambridge men were Alfred Tennyson and Arthur Hallam. The future author of *Idylls of the King* and the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, accompanied by the man whose death was to inspire *In Memoriam*, bringing aid and comfort to desperadoes in a mountain hide-out!

OF COURSE IT IS NOT ONLY WRITERS who are tempted by the cosy togetherness of group action, and the short-term satisfaction of doing something that has a demonstrable effect. But the loneliness of a writer's life makes him, especially in youth, vulnerable to the need for power. He wants to *matter* to somebody, instead of being politely tolerated and half-heartedly encouraged because literature is a Good Thing. And it is not lost on him that the individual who is committed to a cause outside himself, who is prepared, or appears to be prepared, to stake his entire life on the chance of making his ideal come true, is a very attractive figure: that he has, to use the word that we have conspired to burgle from the theologians, *charisma*. Even if the writer did not know this from life, literature itself would instruct him that it is so. Think of Turgenev's *On the Eve*! Think of Elena, the intelligent, nervous, receptive Russian girl of good family, who has the love of the decent young man of her own class, Andrei Bersenyev, and could easily win that of the artist Shubin: but it is neither of these she wants. The man who captivates her is Dmitri Nikanorovitch Insarov, the withdrawn, austere Bulgarian exile, who takes no notice of her until she begins to share his passion for the one shining ideal of his life, the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish rule.

[2] See Ferdinand Mount's "The Writer as Revolutionary" in ENCOUNTER, November 1975.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Elena looked at him from the side.

"You love your country very dearly?" she articulated timidly.

"That remains to be shown," he answered. "When one of us dies for her, then one can say he loved his country."

"So that, if you were cut off all chance of returning to Bulgaria," continued Elena, "would you be very unhappy in Russia?"

Insarov looked down.

"I think I could not bear that," he said.

"Tell me", Elena began again, "is it difficult to learn Bulgarian?"

"Not at all. It's a disgrace to a Russian not to know Bulgarian. A Russian ought to know all the Slavonic dialects. Would you like me to bring you some Bulgarian books? You will see how easy it is. What ballads we have! equal to the Servian. But stop a minute, I will translate to you one of them. It is about . . . . But you know a little of our history at least, don't you?"

"No, I know nothing of it", answered Elena.

"Wait a little and I will bring you a book. You will learn the principal facts at least from it. Listen to the ballad then. . . . But I had better bring you a written translation, though. I am sure you will love us, you love all the oppressed. If you knew what a land of plenty ours is! And, meanwhile, it has been downtrodden, it has been ravaged", he went on, with an involuntary movement of his arm, and his face darkened; "We have been robbed of everything; everything, our churches, our laws, our lands; the unclean Turks drive us like cattle, butcher us—"

"Dmitri Nikanorovitch!" cried Elena.

He stopped.

"I beg your pardon. I can't speak of this coolly. But you asked me just now whether I love my country. What else can one love on earth? What is the one thing unchanging, what is above all doubts, what is it—next to God—one must believe in? And when that country needs. . . . Think; the poorest peasant, the poorest beggar in Bulgaria, and I have the same desire. All of us have one aim. You can understand what strength, what confidence that gives!"

Insarov was silent for an instant; then he began again to talk of Bulgaria. Elena listened to him with absorbed, profound, and mournful attention. When he had finished, she asked him once more:

"Then you would not stay in Russia for anything?"

Here, perfectly dramatised and with no intervening commentary from the author, is the moment of the girl's falling in love. And she loves the man not because he values *her* but because he values something capable of overarching them both. The sombre consequences of this are the novel's theme: but the attraction, and its nature, are beautifully demonstrated.

TO IDENTIFY WITH A MOVEMENT, to enjoy the admiration and loyalty of those who can see the beauty of a life given to the struggle for a tangible objective, must often seem to a writer the solution of his personal problems. But then, if the writer can't face personal problems, and a lot of them, he shouldn't be a writer. And having accepted the profession, or to speak more accurately the vocation, or to speak more accurately still the condition, of authorship, one of the things he needs to learn is the extent to which the social and political situation, the general experience which impinges on him neither more nor less than on thousands of others, is a material that he can work into art: the extent, and the means.

The starting and finishing point, of course, is his experiences as an individual. It will sometimes happen that a cluster of events describable as political will elicit a response from his entire being: it will affect him morally, imaginatively, emotionally, and the work he produces will unite all these.

Sometimes, when a large-scale political event erupts across the world, the reaction of poets is strange in the same way as the behaviour of the dog which attracted the notice of Sherlock Holmes.

—Is there anything else to which you wish to draw my attention?
—Only the singular incident of the dog in the night-time.
—The dog did nothing in the night-time.
—That is the singular incident.

The most extraordinary occasion in our century when the dog did nothing in the night-time, I suppose, was the gradual disaffection of Western Communists in the wake of Stalin's betrayal of the Left. When the Russian people rose and threw off their Czars and their landlords, and proclaimed that power was now in the hands of the poor, young and generous people in every country in the world promptly fell in love with Russia. And when news began to leak out that the first, genuinely popular phase of the Revolution had been quickly succeeded by a cool power-grabbing operation by a group of dedicated and ruthless conspirators, when it began to be reported that the Russian people, having formerly been whipped with whips, were now being whipped with scorpions, of course these same generous-minded young rejected such reports as the expected backlash of counter-revolutionary propaganda, the sort of thing the bourgeois enemy would be bound to say. Time went by, the generous-minded young became less young and perhaps a shade less generous-minded, but they still believed in Russia and they associated this belief with Stalin. Stalin was Russia and Russia was the Revolution, so how could he be wrong?

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From this position they were dislodged, in a series of sickening jolts. Some fell off with the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939; others with the refusal to permit free elections in the Soviet zone of Germany immediately after the War, and the subsequent bagging of an Eastern European empire; the last and biggest layer fell off after the bludgeoning of Hungary in 1956. A few, of course, never fell off. There are still hard-shell Stalinists who take the line that Stalin was right by definition, so if murder and treachery were committed by Stalin, then murder and treachery must be right. In this spirit, we must assume, did the poet Hugh McDiarmid rejoin the Communist Party in 1956, after being out of it for some years, and declare that those who left were a bunch of softies and the Party was "well shot of them."

The hard-shell survivors made their attitudes abundantly clear: but what of those who fell off? What inward struggles, torments, questionings, final resolutions, did they undergo? And why did the poets among them not bring this material into their poems? No doubt there are many poems I have missed; but I have read a great many poems written in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, many of them by Socialists, and I do not remember a single one that dealt with the agony of withdrawing one's loyalty from Stalin, formerly the all-hallowed Leader.

THE SITUATION CAN BE SEEN in all its singularity if we compare it with the exactly parallel sequence of events that happened some hundred and thirty years earlier. When the French people rose and threw off their monarchy and aristocracy, and declared a revolutionary democracy, young and generous people in every country fell in love with France. And when the revolutionary society brought forth the *Grande Armée* with Napoleon at its head, there were still people in every country who felt that Napoleon must be right, because Napoleon was France and France was the Revolution.

When Napoleon was finally broken at Waterloo, the occasion was one of exultation for the bulk of the English people; at last the suffering of the Napoleonic Wars was over, at last there had been a great victory for British arms. But for "progressives", who had never been able to slough off a certain awe of Napoleon and had clung to a certain identification with France, the day was a sad one. Benjamin Robert Haydon's diary has a famous page about the effect first on himself, then by contrast on Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt.

> "... I ran back again to Scott's. They were gone to bed, but I knocked them up and said, 'The Duke has beat Napoleon, taken one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and is marching to Paris.' Scott began to ask questions. I said, 'None of your questions; it's a fact,' and both of us said 'Huzza!'
>
> "I went home and to bed; got up and to work. Sammons, my model and corporal of the 2nd Life Guards, came, and we tried to do our duty; but Sammons was in such a fidget about his regiment charging, and I myself was in such a heat, I was obliged to let him go. Away he went, and I never saw him till late next day, and then he came drunk with talking. I read the *Gazette* the last thing before going to bed. I dreamt of it and was fighting all night; I got up in a steam of feeling and read the *Gazette* again, ordered a *Courier* for a month, called at the confectioner's and read all the papers till I was faint.... 'Have not the efforts of the nation', I asked myself 'been gigantic? To such glories, she only wants to add the glories of my noble art to make her the grandest nation in the world, and these she shall have if God spare my life.'
>
> "June 25: Read the *Gazette* again, till I now know it actually by heart. Dined with Hunt. I give myself great credit for not worrying him to death at this news; he was quiet for some time, but knowing it must come by-and-by, and putting on an air of indifference, he said, 'Terrible battle this, Haydon.' 'A glorious one, Hunt.' 'Oh, yes, certainly', and to it we went.
>
> "Yet Hunt took a just and liberal view of the question. As for Hazlitt, it is not to be believed how the destruction of Napoleon affected him; he seemed prostrated in mind and body, he walked about unwashed, unshaved, hardly sober by day, and always intoxicated by night, literally, without exaggeration, for weeks; until at length, wakening up as it were from his stupor, he at once left off all stimulating liquors, and never touched them after."

Hazlitt, who wrote a vast biography of Napoleon, simply could not adapt to the destruction of his idol. Not being an imaginative writer, he has left us no record of his inner struggles and sufferings. But his story is useful as background to that of a great poet who endured all this and *has* left an account of it. The young Wordsworth toured France during the first heady, idealistic days of the Revolution, when every café and every town square was the forum for excited debate, when new ideas were springing up everywhere and "human nature seeming born again." And when revolutionary France became Napoleonic France, and entered on her expansionist phase, Wordsworth's agony was deep; a country boy, rooted in his environment and his neighbourhood, he could not make the effortless switch to supporting a foreign power against his own country, to cheering on soldiers who were killing his countrymen, that came so easily to the rootless Viet Nam generation.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . I, who with the breeze
Had play'd, a green leaf on the blessed tree
Of my beloved country; nor had wish'd
For happier fortune than to wither there,
Now from my pleasant station was cut off,
And toss'd about in whirlwinds. I rejoiced,
Yea, afterwards, truth most painful to record!
Exulted in the triumph of my soul
When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
Left without glory on the Field, or driven,
Brave hearts, to shameful flight. It was a grief,
Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,
A conflict of sensations without name,
Of which he only who may love the sight
Of a Village Steeple as I do can judge
When in the Congregation, bending all
To their great Father, prayers were offer'd up,
Or praises for our Country's Victories,
And 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance,
I only, like an uninvited Guest
Whom no one own'd sate silent, shall I add,
Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come?

There is the note of tragedy, too, in his description of France under the Terror, when blood-lust attacked the nation like a plague, and "the crimes of few Became the madness of the many." These passages remind us that there is nothing anti-poetic, anti-imaginative, in public affairs as such. All that is needful—but it is totally and at all times needful—is that the situation should claim the poet entirely, down to the roots of his being and coming up as fresh foliage; there must be no parading with boughs cut from Birnam Wood.

IF A POEM DEALS WITH the public situation, it must absorb that situation into its metaphors, its rhythms and its entire verbal fabric. Wordsworth in *The Prelude* succeeds in making his experience of revolutionary politics as much a part of the poem, as naturalised in its tone and pace, as his experience of mountains or city solitudes. An example of the same kind of success within a different area would be John Crowe Ransom's "Captain Carpenter".

Here, if this were the spoken and not the written version of this lecture, would come a reading aloud of the whole of "Captain Carpenter". In print, that strikes me as unnecessary; it has been a well-known poem since its publication in the 1920s; Riding and Graves quoted it entire in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*; it has appeared in several anthologies, notably the *Oxford Book of American Verse*; and was published in the author's *Selected Poems* on both sides of the Atlantic. Presumably anyone who does not know it can easily look it up. But—as a reminder or a preliminary sketch—Captain Carpenter is the Quixote-figure who "rose up in his prime, Put on his pistols and went riding out." He is always riding out, and each time he meets an adversary who defeats him with contemptuous ease. A "pretty lady" cuts off his nose with a sword; next comes

a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue

But drew upon him out of his great heart.

The stranger rogue cracks the Captain's shins; then the wife of Satan bites off his arms; someone else cuts off his ears, then he loses his eyes, and finally

I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
Such are the perils he is cast among."

Finally, his most contemptible adversary cuts him open and takes his heart; the "neatest knave that ever was seen Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower."

The poem's conclusion is affecting; the poet utters a lament over Captain Carpenter and a commination on his enemies. The lines reverberate with tragic compassion.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the old heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

But of course, just as strongly as compassion, the poem conveys a head-shaking irony. Captain Carpenter is gallant and chivalrous, but he is also absurd. His knight-errant code governs him as if he were a clockwork toy (the "stranger rogue" might or might not have been "unchristian", but the Captain did not wait to find out). He lives in a world that puzzles him; the other characters do not stick to the script, any more than Don Quixote's opponents. The wife of Satan "should have made off like a hind"; instead, "the bitch bit off his arms at the elbows." "Hind" is interesting; she was supposed to run away as fast and timidly as a female deer, and also to be subservient like a menial ("hind" in the sense of "farm servant"). She did neither. Nobody plays by the rules Captain Carpenter has been brought up to. And when we build in the information that John Crowe Ransom is a Southern poet, identified with agrarian ideas and with the Southern literary and social tradition generally, we see readily enough that this is a poem about the South; that

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it deals with the Civil War and its aftermath, and the humiliation of that society at the hands of enemies who did not comprehend, let alone share, its good qualities, but who had to win because the South was a natural loser, antiquated, unteachable and a bit comic.

This, by the way, is one of those cases where a little external information, coming in from outside the poem itself, is crucial. To a reader who had no idea of Ransom's associations, the theme of the South would not suggest itself—though the poem would still have the same basic diagram and the same emotional impact. But after all, Ransom's Southern-ness is very much a fact within the public domain. He was associated with Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon and Robert Penn Warren in the Fugitive Group of Nashville, Tennessee; he contributed to a much-discussed volume of essays from a Southern agrarian point of view called *I'll Take my Stand*; etc., etc. To read Ransom with no awareness of his background would be as fruitless as trying to do the same for Auden or Yevtushenko.

I see no reason to doubt that the view of Southern history and Southern society that we find in "Captain Carpenter" is Ransom's actual view. It is very much the view one would expect in a Southern American of his type. (It would probably not be the view of a black man.) And it is admirably conveyed not only by the poem's fable but by its physical nature too. The language is in a rather rusty fancy dress; it is "tricked in antique ruff and bonnet", abounding in words like "knave", "rout" (for assembly), "enow". The punctuation consists of a single full stop at the end stanza, thus conveying (as Riding and Graves pointed out) something of the atmosphere of a chapbook ballad. Linguistically, the poem is moth-eaten and sagging like a worn-out sofa, which is precisely what it is telling us that the South is like; but the sofa was originally made by good craftsmen to reflect the pride of some elegant house, the family are fond of it, and to chop it up for firewood is a melancholy task. Fable, metaphor, linguistic tone, rhythm—they all combine, with their quixotry and faded elegance, to make a social and historical statement.

Of course the statement, like any statement, is made from a "class" point of view. The moment we open our mouths to speak, let alone put pen to paper, we are of our social class, we reflect our upbringing and education—as I recognised glancingly, above, by the remark that Ransom's view of the South would not be that of a black man. Nor, for that matter, of a subsistence-level "poor white."

The wave of populism that is washing over our society at the moment is an interesting phenomenon and deserves to be analysed calmly. One of its most striking features, when we come to any of the arts, is the deep-seated guilt about privilege, the feeling that what all can't have, no one must. This has now reached the proportions of a mania. The other day I noticed someone airing his views in a correspondence column, maintaining that the Oxford Union, to whose usefulness as a training-ground several politicians had been testifying, was "a private, privileged club" which should be abolished immediately. Setting aside the question of whether the Union is useful to an aspiring politician or merely misleading—I wouldn't know—it still seems worth pausing for a moment over this notion of privilege. The society is open to anyone who becomes a member of Oxford University and is willing to pay a modest subscription; thousands of young people become eligible for membership every year and continue to be eligible as long as they live; if this is "privilege", then so is everything that can't be joined by any casual passer-by in the street. Hasn't every school, every university, every regiment, every lodge, every Trade Union, some organisation that is restricted to its own membership—if only for mere manageability's sake? But we must breathe fire and slaughter over the Oxford Union Society because (I suppose) the word "Oxford" has the same resonance as the word "privilege" in its emotional field, and because Conservative (as well as Socialist) politicians acknowledge a debt to it.

ENOUGH OF THIS Aunt Sally game at three shies a penny. But the unimportant straw shows the direction of an important wind. It is this wind that makes young poets afraid to study their craft with any real professional devotion, lest their writing should appear to be losing that cherished note of the casual and the familiar, the four-letter and the street-corner, which is its party card. Back—or forward, or sideways—to a folk idiom! And the interest in folk art is in itself sympathetic, possibly even fruitful. Except that underneath it one scents a fallacy, a sentimental impulse to pretend. The fact is that the cult of folk art, in "developed" countries, is exactly on a par with the cult of the steam traction engine. It is nostalgic; it warms itself by

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

keeping alive the memory of something kindly, and slow, and old-fashioned.[3] The crowds at folk-concerts, the crowds at cosy, slangy poetry-readings, are indulging in nostalgia—which isn't, in itself, a sin; it only becomes hampering when it obscures a clear-sighted view of the situation. And the situation is that the folk idiom is dead. As soon as there is a popular press, let alone radio, film, television, then folk art lies with a dagger in its heart. And if we try to imitate a folk idiom, to put flesh and skin on those dead bones by an act of will, we are condemning ourselves to an art without roots.

The fact is that any poet who wants to work at the most effective level, to realise the power of his own imagination, and to communicate with the greatest number of people, will use the full resources of modern poetry as they have been developed, internationally, by experimentation and study. The "difficult" modern poet, who work is supposed to be unintelligible and is anathema to the populist, ends up being read by a much wider public than the *faux-naïf* or even the genuine *naïf*.

True, there is a perfectly reasonable counter-argument to this. The modern arts command a large public because they offer work in a bourgeois idiom and they address a bourgeois audience. Since most of the people who expect to take any notice of art—to go to concerts, to buy books, to frequent art galleries—are middle-class, they naturally attend to the middle-class artist. And since these are the people who travel abroad, study foreign languages, attend international universities, and so forth, the bourgeois artist is addressing a large international public, able to dispose of large funds; sometimes privately, sometimes by influencing the channelling of public money. All this, we are assured, will be different when we have changed the structure of society and abolished the class system.

So BE IT. In an utterly changed society, there will be an utterly changed art, just as there will be utterly changed conceptions of justice, leisure, and productivity. Perhaps even happiness and sadness will change their character, as they seem to have done already in the hippie jungles. But—to use an expression from the common tongue that was already well-worn when Jonathan Swift overheard it and transferred it to the printed page—let us not throw out our dirty water till we get clean. It would be a tragic mistake to abandon a tradition of art and literature that is still sound and fruitful, merely because it can be hastily stigmatised as "bourgeois." It is, doubtless, a thing to be regretted that the bourgeois person takes an interest in art and invests time and effort in appreciating it and the manual worker doesn't—but we shall not remedy that state of affairs just by ridiculing the bourgeois until he gives up and turns his time and effort elsewhere. Thus leaving "the field" clear—what field?

The bourgeoisie, as at present constituted, has one great redeeming feature as a public for art. It numbers many people who are not, or not totally and all the time, politicised. It contains many individuals who can look at a work of art simply as an utterance on behalf of general humanity, without asking whether it can be narrowed down to serve this or that Cause. Not that Causes aren't important, but their importance is not the same as that of art.

AND WHY, IN THE END, does it matter so much? Why do we take so much trouble to protect art from the meaty hands of those whose wish is to grab it, package it, weigh and measure it, twist it into a shape convenient for their purposes and then another shape and another, till they tire of it at last and throw it out with the other broken toys? Why not let them have it?

WE CANNOT LET THEM have it because art, the free exercise of the imagination, is just about the only thing we have left, the only complete success our species can point to. Most of our techniques concern pure bedrock survival. But if we want to do more than survive, if we want to lift up our heads and assert that we, too, amount to something, what is there left but art? Everything else is a failure or a compromise. Men of science toil devotedly for years, breaking through time after time into fresh knowledge, and at the end of it their discoveries are absorbed into a technology that devises crueller and crueller weapons, that puts three men on the moon while three million starve for want of common bread. Politicians make power-structures which, at the most, give security and contentment to a bare majority. The most

[3] When the steam traction-engine erupts into literature in the pages of *Jude the Obscure* it does so as something alien, disruptive and terrifying; that was its heyday, when it was Progress.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

successful form of government is sixty per cent failure, if the object of government is to give people happiness and justice; and over most of the world's surface, government is simply another name for bloody terror and exploitation.

Turn to the inward life and the same picture is there. Mystics may be exalted but they cannot pass on their exaltation to their fellow-men; saints are imperfect and are tortured by their imperfection; every attempt at a life has failed. Others again base their ideal of fulfilment on personal relationships, and shrivel into dust at the first betrayal, which comes sooner or later as surely as the leaves fall off the trees. Only in the sphere of art is humanity able to rise totally above its failures and inadequacies. Contemplating a great painting, listening to a great symphony, watching a great play, reading a great novel or poem, only then are we in the presence of the human assertion without the human denial, the human achievement without the human failure, the human splendour without the human tarnish—if only because the denial, the failure, the tarnish, are taken into that totality and orchestrated with it, and lifted up, so that we see our imperfections mirrored in our splendours, and we accept ourselves, at last, in peace and thankfulness. The glories of art are the only totally achieved glories we have left; and to the people who want always to cheapen them, to bring them down into the committee-room and the parade-ground, who want to use them as a means and muzzle them and discipline them and chop them into convenient lengths, our answer must be the same as it has been for hundreds of years, the only possible answer, the answer that is given in the closing words of *Love's Labour's Lost*—

> The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo: you that way, we this way.

Secrecy

things saved—
honey, or juice for stings,
and what you turn them to;

the ventriloquist wolf
whistling at someone across there,
hair on a distant groin;

the explosive's prayer
for a glory and end,
its unreversible flower;

the translations
of bad years (good barks),
love not saying so;

not calling,
the unrung bell,
the untold not being told;

spreading,
abstraction, an absentee
in the working head;

kept,
till it is all the same
and the preserved go loose.

Alistair Elliot

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Peter Schwiefert

Letters to a Mother (II)

IN NOVEMBER 1939, *Salazar, following Hitler's orders, had decided to rid Portugal of all German Jews. When Peter Schwiefert wrote on 2 March 1940 he had already been arrested and imprisoned for over three months. He had told his mother nothing about it so as to spare her anxiety, and it was only after his release and expulsion that he wrote to her from Rome to tell her what had happened, though even then he made as little as possible of what he had been through. He was unaware that she had been kept informed of events by a friendly couple with whom she was in correspondence and that, in fact, he had been released solely through her efforts and her money.*

Athens, 28 March 1940

DARLING MOTHER,
I arrived in Athens this morning where your letter was awaiting me. The journey from Lisbon has taken three weeks all told. As there is a mass of things to explain and discuss I shall begin by going straight to the essentials if you don't mind. The rest can come later. I shall start by answering your questions point by point.

My journey—absolutely no point in further elaboration, because you know how it was. I myself don't know how I got through it but I'm prepared to believe that I have a guardian angel who always steps in at the crucial moment. Without the angel, everything would be unbelievable from beginning to end. Suffice it to say that I am now in Athens and that a new chapter is beginning.

My letter from Rome—it soft-pedalled everything on purpose; I was sounding the ground to find out what you knew and what you didn't. I didn't realise that you knew all. My intention, as during the previous few months, was to spare you pointless anxiety by saying only what was strictly necessary and by presenting my position as tolerable. I can now admit that it wasn't. That fourteen-week period in Lisbon was very tough and I really did go through the mill. I couldn't have endured it much longer. But more about that later. That you knew about my arrest as long ago as the beginning of February is one of the great surprises of your letter. Why didn't you tell me so at once? I can't remember very well your letters of that period, but one thing I'm absolutely convinced of, that you never made the faintest allusion to it. Now that you admit how worried you were I see how entirely justified my silence was. As I took it for granted that you couldn't do anything to help me, and as I hoped up to the last minute that I would extricate myself thanks to the Jewish Committee, it seemed utterly pointless to worry you for nothing.

The second surprise of your letter is that you wrote to the Committee and to the Wieners. I had no idea that you had moved into action. The Committee told me absolutely nothing about it. Neither about your efforts nor about your financial assistance. I assumed—until today—that the Committee, and the Committee alone, had paid my fares. The only sign from you was passed on to me by Madame Mathilde Beusaude (the woman I told you about); she told me you had written to the Committee asking for news of me. And I implored Madame Beusaude not to tell you anything about me as I wanted to do that myself.

And I knew nothing, either, about the money you sent. It is true that without it I wouldn't have been allowed to leave Portugal (I was in prison right up to the moment that I took my place in the train). But that you had to sacrifice your

"LETTERS TO A MOTHER" *forms part of the surviving correspondence of a young German, Peter Schwiefert, who emigrated from Germany to Portugal in 1938, at the age of 21, and was killed six years later fighting with the French Resistance. The correspondence has already been published in France, where it has had an enthusiastic reception, and will shortly be published in London (Search Press, 2–10 Jerdan Place, SW6, £3.50, paper £1.95) and New York (St Martin's Press, $8.95) under the title "The Bird Has No Wings", edited by Claude Lanzmann and translated by Barbara Lucas. A first selection from the letters appeared in the May issue of* ENCOUNTER.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

allowance for several months so as to help me hits me very hard. I knew nothing about it and did all I could so that you wouldn't have to take on such a burden. I wanted to avoid the very thing that happened. Now that it's done and that I realise I would never have got out without your help, and that I would still be in prison, please accept all my thanks. You literally saved me.

As for Greece, I didn't choose this country. But Greece presented me with the only way of getting out once the Brazil solution had fallen through. I had put in a request for Brazil a long time before and at first I thought it would work. But the visa was refused and for the following reason: the policeman who accompanied me to the Consulate was known there and hence they knew that I had been arrested. It was only the Greek consul who was still prepared to allow me into his country and this for the sole reason that I already had a Yugoslav visa in my pocket. All other possibilities were excluded.

America—I've been enrolled on their quota and perhaps I shall get there in a few years provided I obtain a good *affidavit*. I didn't want Spain or Italy for obvious reasons. South and Central America are out of the question if one hasn't got money or relations in those countries (the minimum demanded everywhere is a guarantee of 500 dollars). As for Brazil, I was dying to go there but there are two insurmountable obstacles. First, transport—as a German with a passport that does not bear the letter "J", I wouldn't get through the English control point. Secondly, there's the refusal of a visa by the Consulate in Lisbon. So only the Balkans remained. I could go to Yugoslavia—and also surely to you, for I imagine a Bulgarian visa would be easy to get there. That I shall see about, but not just yet. In one way or another a means will be found. When you say that I'm acting irresponsibly and without sufficient thought you're talking absolute nonsense. If I were, my situation would be better. But it is not the case and you ought to realise that I can't do anything else at the moment but try Greece.

I HAVE NO CHOICE, and that's all there is to it. One thing is certain: it's terribly difficult and I don't know what's going to happen. I'm in a situation where I must always expect the worst, and that's what I'm doing. I have no solid support left. My most demanding adventure has now started, with my expulsion from Portugal. The vital thing is that I should settle down somewhere, but how, that's what I don't know at the moment. So please understand, Mother—just as soon as I settle down and start work, then I shall get straight, then I shall be saved. But I'm not there yet. For the moment I've got to keep up my spirits in the face of ill-luck and take what I'm offered, whatever it may be. If I can't stay here, I shall have to go elsewhere, and if that doesn't work out, then elsewhere again, and so on until a miracle perhaps happens or the war ends. What more can I say? I shall try to do my best. You say that people should avoid getting into a mess. Very pretty, but I'm there, I'm in a mess, and not through my fault. I was driven for no reason out of a country where I'd lived modestly and peaceably for a year and a half. I've landed up in a void (or in a mess, if you prefer) and now I must see whether there's anything I can hitch on to (a little star, perhaps!). I'm not in a position to pick and choose, so there's no question of "acting irresponsibly and without sufficient thought" (forget about my letter from Rome), on the contrary it's extremely serious, and I know it, and the only thing I can say to soothe you is to assure you that I'm adaptable and by and large not easily beaten. I've a considerable capacity for endurance in adversity and what's more I now have very few demands. I've learned to be satisfied with little. If I add that I seem always able to find people prepared to help me, then really there's no reason to give up hope. I must stick it out, I will stick it out, I won't give in. That's absolutely certain!

My goal is to leave Europe. I never lose sight of it, I'm thinking about it all the time.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 30 April 1940

IT WAS so lovely to talk to you! Although your voice was so sad because of the disappointment. But what does it matter in the long run? A small delay, that's all, which means nothing after so many years of waiting. You'll come soon, in ten days or a fortnight, and then we'll have forgotten all about it. And besides we would have been very surprised, you and I, if everything had gone without a hitch the first time. Nothing goes smoothly nowadays. And thank you, Mother, for telephoning. And now you must come!

No news here. No decision has yet been made —that's for the day after tomorrow. But I've something else in view—I'll talk to you about it —and I'm a bit depressed because I'm beginning to have had enough of the city, not of Athens, no, but of the city, you understand! But what does it matter—the crucial thing is to see you, and quickly.

Peter

I love you.
Kiss the children. Tell them to write!

Athens, 3 May 1940

MY DARLING,
Thank you for your last letter, but I think you're beginning to get a bit peculiar. For instance

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now you suddenly don't want to come because some of your friends have warned you against it! How you love taking other people's advice! Yet you're usually so independent. So no more words, my dear—this trip must be made, and as soon as possible! You must overcome all difficulties and obstacles—because I want to see you, and you want it too! Please, please don't put it off for another day. What your horoscope says is of total indifference to me and you can tell those people from me that they can mind their own business and not interfere with things they don't understand. For they couldn't possibly know how vital it is for us to see each other. And even if you made the trip solely because I wanted you to, it would still be amply justified. What the hell really matters at this moment? What have we got apart from our love? What's the point of living if we always have to do violence to our feelings? Don't you see that we must finish once and for all with all this chit-chat about what's prudent and what's wise and what's right and what isn't? That you should come is right and good and necessary because we both want it and need it in the deepest part of ourselves. That's the sole valid justification for anything! And that's all that need be said, because it's really too absurd to go into lengthy cogitation as to whether two people who haven't seen each other for years and are only a few hours' journey apart should meet or not.

You ask whether it wouldn't be preferable to send me the money you would otherwise have spent on the journey—a question it's utterly superfluous to answer. I have enough to live on, I can manage, and, as you already know, I've other things in view. So stop worrying about me—how many times must I repeat this? It's time wasted. Your sole preoccupation should be to *come*. Then you will see if I really resemble you, as you say. . . . Why were the children "pale with emotion" during our telephone call? Were they with you? And if so, why didn't you let me have a word with them? I kiss them a thousand times and hold you in my arms with all my love and wild longing to see you. Come quickly!

Forgive me, but who does Erich think he is when he says I ought to go back? Is he just making idle chatter or does he still not realise what I think and who I am?

Your *Peter*

Athens, 6 June 1940

DARLING MOTHER,

Once again you're worrying for no good reason. By and large my morale is very good, I'm sometimes tired, that's all. It's perfectly natural that I should be depressed now and again for one reason or another and that then I should talk too much about it. But, as you know, I've got a cheerful disposition, depression doesn't last long with me and doesn't undermine my resolution. This remains intact and will continue to do so, all I hope is that I shall be given the chance to show it. Which doesn't look likely at the moment. What you tell me about Bulgaria surprises me, I must say; I had been given quite a different picture. But if it is as you say then I must naturally exclude that possibility. You're quite right about that. I hope in any case that the situation won't arise of my having to envisage it even as a last resort, because here things are taking a turn for the better. A certain easing-up is apparent, and if I'm not greatly mistaken everything will soon come right.

Tina's behaviour certainly sounds deplorable, but I think you're being over-dramatic about it. She's at the age when adolescents get blinded by their successes, the compliments they receive, the heady awareness of no longer being children (and it's even truer with girls), so they think themselves marvellous and tend to display a surface personality, which doesn't mean that they're really superficial in any basic sense. True self-awareness comes at a later stage, and there's no reason to suppose things will be different with Tina. Nor does her lack of intellectual curiosity strike me as being too heinous. You must remember how young she is. And tell me how you can expect her to have a basic formation when she's never had the chance to be properly educated. You must be fair to her. Let her wallow in her nonsense, let her be silly, it's all in the course of nature.

Goodbye, my darling. I can assure you that for me you're a "fabulous" mother. I'm indescribably glad to have you, I love you with all my soul and kiss you.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 14 June 1940

TELL ME, what's happening, why this silence? It's a week since you've written. I'm worried. Please put my mind at rest at once! And how about the money you told me would be coming? Are you having difficulties? I'm really terribly short and don't know how I'll carry on if I get nothing from you. Forgive me for seeming so pressing, but, as you know, my hands are tied. I can't work—how could I when I'm forbidden to do so? And all contact with the Committee is finished for good. Let me have your news at once and, please, send some money, it's urgent.

Goodbye, I kiss you.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 22 June 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,

Four letters from you have arrived. You really are odd: I just kick my heels and wait while you send your letters through Germany.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What did you hope to achieve when you sent your letter of the 12th to Berlin? Were you absolutely determined that it should be opened and stamped by 578 minor employees? Because that's what happened, so it's all to the good that it was harmless. But do avoid that in future!

By temporarily suspending all granting of visas, the Greeks have at least eliminated one disaster, that of reciprocal reproaches between us two. But still, I'm longing for the suspension to be withdrawn so that finally, finally you can come!

I've had a letter from Grandmother; I too get the impression that she's very well and, everything considered, calm, and this makes me very happy. She has one great advantage over us; the things of war which affect us so intimately don't exist for her. She's no longer in a state to think about them and that's a great good fortune for her. If you ask me what will be the ultimate fate of our people, I can only say that it's my constant anxiety. But oppression has become the rule; the fate of one particular group loses its importance and pales before the enormity of events. Yet I remain an optimist in spite of everything; I believe in the countries that today ought to be believed in. The only trouble is that it may go on for a very, very long time. But the final outcome is certain, you can be sure of that. Write soon, my darling, and please let me know when I can expect the money.

A thousand kisses and all the love of

Your *Peter*

Athens, 3 July 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,

Thank you for the money which arrived only just in time. The postman had simply mislaid your registered letter! By way of reparation the post office offered to discipline him. To be absolutely honest I had in fact counted on a thousand. Because, you see, it's so terribly difficult here and there's a limit to. . . . When one can't go on, one can't go on! Even the smallest contribution makes all the difference to me and I was thinking of asking you if you could possibly let me have five hundred a month. I do assure you, Mother, I wouldn't ask this if I wasn't forced to, because I know how hard things are for you too. But my situation is such—don't let's pretend to each other—that I can no longer indulge the luxury of scruples. I've no choice. . . . Like thousands of other emigrants.

Will you ever come? Is it absolutely impossible in the near future? And how about Bolivia? Have you forgotten? Or is there nothing to be done in that quarter?

I'm getting frightened for you again, my darling. The tone of your letters is so desperate! Alas, there's nothing I can answer. But I would at least like to say this: think of the sufferings of others and then compare them with your own! I would never have thought that it helps but now I know that it does. I kiss you with all my love and don't give up, mind!

Always your *Peter*

Because, you see, we've got to live. And we can't depend on ourselves any more because our hands are tied. Couldn't we receive a small monthly sum from Rio or America, from Walter Slezak for example? Ten to fifteen dollars, not more. For me it would be terrific and for Walter a mere nothing. Can you write to him, to ask?

Athens, 8 July 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,

I assure you I've got enough for food and lodging and that things are looking up. It's not true at all that I'm at rock bottom. I'm still in one piece and no one like me ever goes under. One has to cling on and hope, that's all. And this I'm doing. Only one thing depresses me: I'm not managing to write, I mean write for myself. Do you think it's some temporary incapacity to do with the circumstances and all these horrors, or am I really incapable of writing? Sometimes I'm terrified that the latter explanation is the true one. And then what? Because it's my only reason for living. . . . To take up some "voluntary" work as you suggest is simply not on. I've tried everything; that's forbidden too. I've already offered my services to the Committee and they told me I hadn't the right to do even voluntary work. But there are little things that help me—you understand. To a slight degree, as in Portugal. Oh yes.

When I told you I'd been hoping for a thousand leva it was a simple statement of fact. I know perfectly well you're doing all you can. I can't understand how you could have detected a hint of reproach in my letter. . . . All right, so I'm cross, so I don't love you any more, so I accuse you of not caring about me! Admit, Mother, that you've never thought up anything quite so absurd! Must I tell you again that my gratitude is infinite, like my love! Is it clear?

The heat here is unbearable, much stronger than in Portugal. And I suffer from it considerably. So . . . Uncle Schrobsdorff is with you and you are surely very happy. Enjoy yourself as much as you can. And answer me soon, my darling. A thousand kisses and all my love.

Your *Peter*

If Walter doesn't answer, we could write to Ernst Lubitsch in Hollywood. He's a friend of Walter's and Walter must certainly have his address.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Athens, 14 August 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,
I'm very well at the moment and hope it will last. It's taken four months, but as you can see, everything comes right in the end.

Contrary to what you suppose, the essential question is the one of victory and defeat. It's the only question. And it's only England's victory that counts; I hope for it more ardently than for anything else in the world, I can think of nothing else. The victory of civilisation over barbarism, the victory of human values and human dignity over the boot, over an appalling, sickening, limitless tyranny. It's in England, where the fate of the battle will now be decided, that the vanguard of mankind is fighting, and all the admiration I'm capable of pours out to those men over there who are giving everything and who will win because they must win.

As for me, I shall never "back down" as you suggest. To begin with I have an unshakable conviction that our reasons to exist, what we live for, what we believe in—beauty, art, dignity, freedom—will be restored to us as supreme values, in all the glory of their brilliance and nobility, once this ordeal is over. But even if those values were to be destroyed forever, even if I were given proof of their annihilation, I still wouldn't budge; to move an inch towards the "new order" would be to disown my very self, and thus would be impossible. For—and this is where your argument breaks down—age (my supposed youth!) has nothing to do with the matter. Here is one view of life face to face with another view of life, and once we know which view is ours—and for what motives, motives involving our whole being, we have chosen it—then there's no possible retreat. There's only one world I personally can live in, and if it perishes—if there's not even a desert island I can flee to and find solitude—then I perish with it. But the possibility of backing down will never get even the shadow of a thought from me. I will never be tempted to flow with the tide—even taking practical considerations into account, thoughts like "What else can one do?" or "Don't miss the bus." For nothing disgusts me more than people who begin to compromise with the "new" and try to justify its existence for their own miserable ends. And as for the contortionists who think in two languages, I'm "chauvinistic" enough to put all of them into the same sack with the other luminaries and show them my utter contempt! The man who even allows himself to discuss the value of the "new" has already ceased to be one of us. Similarly, the man who flaunts his objectivity like a shield thinking it will protect him. Objectivity is no longer possible, only unconditionality, hate and action!

This is how I see things and, believe me, I'd give a good deal not to have to remain passive but to do what I look on as my duty—that will be my one and final answer to the exploits of those fine German gentlemen.

There I go, once again I've said a lot, perhaps too much, but what the hell. . . .

Dearest Mother, my darling, don't be cross because my letter is so late in reaching you. And don't give me any more crap like "eating is more important than sentiments", but come, simply *come*—that's what's *important*! I keep on having to find new rooms because all the landladies here are swine.

I give you a big kiss and am always close to you.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 7 September 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,
I'm afraid the optimistic forecasts of my letter before last were premature; I'm still stagnating. Things never go as one wants them to and the struggle here is made more difficult by the fact that no one can be trusted. However I hope October will be better and the winter in general more satisfactory.

I've now got an English girl, or to be more exact an Australian, who couldn't be sweeter and kinder. But she's a virgin, which in itself wouldn't be a tragedy (as it's easy to remedy) if only she weren't a virgin on principle. This obviously complicates things considerably. Perhaps you're familiar with this type of girl. They think this difference they have from other girls (the vast majority) is the most important thing on earth and they safeguard their halo with the most jealous care—an odd mixture of vanity and received ideas. Of course they know they won't keep it for long. That only enhances its value in their eyes.

So my English girl is of this type, and is moreover built in a way that absolutely contradicts all my ideas of feminine beauty and seductiveness. Never mind, I'm putting up a good fight.

Write to me soon, my dear Mother. I give you a huge kiss.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 18 September 1940

MY DEAR TINA,
Mother told me in her last letter about the unfriendly relations that have developed between the two of you. She wasn't complaining, as you know that's not her style. She was simply giving a very objective description of your relations. I

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want to say a few words about this, a right granted me by my age—and so my greater ability to judge—or simply by the boundless love and admiration I have for Mother. Or else—enough in itself—by my position as an impartial observer who condemns evil, approves the good and protects the weak against the strong. So I forbid you to torment Mother, or to oppress her, or to make her unhappy or even worried. I forbid you to be thoughtless towards her, to lack respect for her or show her ill-will.

I'm not interested in the reasons for your hostility. The only thing that matters to me is that your current attitude to Mother is an amalgam of cruelty, contempt and the sort of insubordination I know so well. All through stupidity and ignorance. And I'm putting it mildly.

No doubt you will object that I myself had the same complications with her when I was your age. To which I reply, most of our quarrels arose from the clash of two identical temperaments. Passionate, violent, then immediately afterwards becalmed and incapable of rancour; cynical and intolerant one day, and then the next loving and compliant; bursting with spirit and ingenuity in the morning, weary and apathetic in the afternoon. As Mother said one day, she and I are as like as two peas. We were never at a loss for occasions of conflict. But what was my attitude at such times? First and foremost it was respectful, the attitude of an adversary who rages, abuses, lets himself go, yes, but always in the interests of imposing his opinion and never, do you hear, never, through dislike or contempt. That's what "respectful" means. I never felt any resentment against Mother as a person, I never for one moment thought ill of her however violent our crises were. That's why our explosive quarrels always ended in reconciliation and solemn promises to change (which, to tell the truth, didn't last for long), because—and this is what matters—I was always open and disposed to harmony, at her first tender word I would turn round, wanting nothing but to hold her in my arms.

Also, our quarrels were always about my desire for unconditional freedom. Stupid, inept, and unthinking as I was at that time, I misunderstood the word and maliciously altered its meaning to suit my own purposes. We clashed because Mother wanted to make me see reason at a time when I was obviously not yet ready for it. But characteristically I did not want to offend Mother, nor to oppose her just "for the fun of it." Indeed I preferred to go off somewhere and tried by all possible means to avoid the clash. Now, listen: I never attacked Mother because she thought differently from me, but I was at the mercy of my obsession about "my freedom", and so I saw only my own point of view and was concerned with nothing but imposing it. . . . And I remember our only *real* quarrel, the one which really did poison us both. I'm not too sure what started it off—I must have been really foul. On the night before my birthday she came into my room and gave me a letter without saying a word. She seemed worried, tortured, and when I saw her like that in her nightdress, so small and frail, I was overcome by such a sense of shame, remorse and love, that after she'd gone out again, and having glanced at her letter, I burst out crying. I wept for a long time, unable to hold back my tears, I vowed a thousand times to reform myself from top to bottom and to be more loving towards her from then on. . . .

But at that time—and this is the really important point—Mother was still strong, still overflowing with vitality, initiative, and fight, she resisted, returned blow for blow, and so she suffered much less from our disagreements then than she does from yours now. The war and the upheavals that have come in its train have worn her down; today Mother is at the end of her strength, she has no more reserves to draw on. She needs calm, stability and care and, most of all, she needs protection. She's no longer like before on an equal level with us.

Must I go on, Tina?

So, TO RETURN TO what I was saying at the beginning of this letter, listen to me, Tina: change your attitude, change it immediately, change it without conditions or discussions. I'm not a person who likes to threaten, but I can assure you that if you don't change very quickly, then you'll have to reckon with me. I don't allow anyone, even my own sister, to make Mother's life more difficult than it already is, I don't allow anyone to throw her into despair. I shall defend her from and against everyone and don't delude yourself that this is impossible just because I'm so far away!

For do you know what your Mother is? Let me tell you: she's an exceptional being, a being worthy of admiration and veneration whatever her weaknesses, infinitely good, simple and human, and at the same time with an intelligence, vision, and wisdom without parallel; yes, in every way she's an outstanding woman, generous to the point of self-forgetfulness, with a broad and free spirit, tolerant, attentive to everyone, absolutely without prejudice regarding her children, and loving them, loving them. . . . That's what your mother is, and many might envy you for having her. To hurt such a being—be it through obstinacy, narrow-mindedness or stupidity—is distressing in the utmost.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Just think what Mother gives you compared with what she gets from you in return—you should bury yourself underground in shame! And if this type of consideration doesn't touch you, just try to imagine the sort of inhuman horror that may await us and how we shall then have but one recourse: to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder, so as to transmute our common weakness into strength, to tap from there the courage to defend ourselves; abolishing all that is personal, all pettinesses and vanities, to bring chance on to our side, chance whose name is solidarity, mutual help, kindness, tolerance, the disposition of sacrifice.

This is what I wanted to say to you. And I hope I haven't spoken in vain. If you want to answer, then please do so. You can tell Mother about this letter if you want to. It's up to you.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 18 September 1940

DEAREST MOTHER,

Many thanks for the photographs and especially for the one of you. It's difficult to make out much and it would be better if your face was in the foreground for once, but anyway I've put it in my wallet and take a furtive look at it from time to time.

I'm very distressed by what you tell me about Tina. I have just written her a long letter—with your tacit consent—but please don't ask to see it if she doesn't show it to you of her own accord. You're not to blame for anything, it's Tina who's in the wrong; you can't explain away her conduct by her youth or by the arrogance that accompanies first love; there's also her tough, obstinate character, what you rightly call her peasant distrust. The truth is that Tina is now a stranger to me, I can't visualise her any more. And any comparison of her with me is no longer helpful; we're totally different and conditions are no longer the same.

So that's that. Don't be too tragic about it, she's still very young, she'll change. You on your side must try to show her a little coldness and contempt; stop showing her excessive love and the desire to make up at all costs. And, most importantly, give her free rein. You can't hold her in, she's stronger than you.

I'm speaking now in an objective and detached way, but at bottom I'm outraged that she should make you suffer, you don't deserve it, it makes me wild. I've written very firmly to Tina and I hope she'll take my words to heart. There's nothing more I can do. If I were home I'd bring her to heel I assure you.

To hear that Angelika is reading *Werther* is as surprising as it is delightful. I have to admit to my great shame that I've never yet come to grips with it, so you see, she's overtaking me already! How far will she go? As for her "complications", no need for you to worry, she has a strong nature and the tensions within it are not a danger to her, quite the reverse.

Write soon, my darling, I long to hear from you. There's nothing new to report from here. How about the money from America? Has anything been, will anything be, sent? Please keep me informed. All my love, I kiss you.

Your *Peter*

Athens, 28 October 1940

MY DARLING,

No panic, please, nothing has changed. Of course it's always difficult to see how the situation will evolve, but it's generally assumed that here, where we are, we won't be affected by future developments. Wish for luck! And yet it's possible that contact between us will be interrupted soon. If that occurs, please don't be unduly alarmed; nothing can happen to me, nothing will happen to me. All we can hope is that the outcome will be the one we wish for! Write to me at once, assuming the post still functions. If anything important should develop, I'll try to let you know at once.

I kiss you and hug you a thousand times

Your *Peter*

Athens, 23 November 1940

MY DARLING,

Since the declaration of war[1] I've totally lost touch with you. It's true communications were cut off at first, but they're now more or less back to normal and I've been assured that letters are getting through. So why haven't I had any news?

All is calm here and I'm well. But unfortunately I've not been given a job on any front, so I just have to be patient.

I hope all is well with you. Please write and let me know so that I can be sure. I love you and kiss you endlessly. And have courage, you'll see!

Your *Peter*

Athens, 5 March 1941

MY DARLING MOTHER,

I sent you a telegram yesterday and again I repeat: don't be worried, don't be alarmed, even if you don't get any news. My silence will be *absolutely* normal. We've got to pass through this period of trial. I'm more confident than I've ever been and I know what I'm doing is right. I'm

[1] In November 1940, Bulgaria declared war against England.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with you all in my heart, you're all in each and every one of my thoughts. Take care of yourselves, my loved ones, and hold fast, I can only pray for you now and wrap you in such a love that will give you the strength to resist everything.

I kiss you and the children, infinitely.
Peter

Athens, 14 March 1941

MOTHER DARLING
Another attempt to reassure you that all is going for the best. You can be at peace, and remain there, you must! Your telegram arrived safely and I'm delighted at the excellent news it contained. May things go on like that, I wish for nothing else. I am with you and I know that you, too, are with me. The certainty of this gives me strength in my resolution and I thank you, Mother, I thank you for all that you are, all that you are for me: more than a mother . . . something larger, higher. . . .

I kiss you.
Peter

WITH THE LETTER *of 14 March 1941 contact between mother and son came to an end. Eleven months later Peter's mother received a Red Cross message from Jerusalem. In it Peter told her that he was in Palestine staying with a mutual friend, Ilse Hirsch (who herself had left Berlin in 1936) and that he had chosen to live there. These Red Cross messages, sent very irregularly and arriving very slowly at their destination, remained their sole means of communication throughout the War. And then on 30 June 1945 (her birthday), after the end of hostilities, Peter's mother, still in Sofia, received a letter dated 27 November 1944.*

27 November 1944

MOTHER, BETTINA, ANGELIKA, my darlings, I'm huddled in a tent in the middle of the woods. I'm cold, it's raining, it's autumn, but I've got a blanket wrapped around me. The woods are in France, somewhere on the Western front. We're in the front line and opposite us are the Germans. From time to time we can see them about two or three hundred metres away. . . . Apart from sporadic gunfire and the thunder of artillery now and again, all is quiet. All is quiet and it's raining and I'm cold, and I'm writing you my first letter for four years.

I agree it's taken me some time to write. When I heard the great news, and when the news was confirmed as true[2] I wrote at once, but then stopped almost as soon. Because it wasn't me who was writing, but another, a stranger. And yet the spirit of impassioned hours has surely always dwelt within me. . . .

But now the bird has no wings. I wanted to write a little every day. I tried, I tried to be myself—but I couldn't. Because, you see, four years have passed, because I was and am writing in a language we've never spoken together,[3] because there are so many things to say. They come rushing, dashing upon me all at the same time, they snowball, they collide with each other, until I'm thoroughly confused and discouraged; first of all, then, order has to be restored, vision clarified, confusion dissipated, and then contact and warmth have to be rediscovered, as well as a way of expressing myself that doesn't ring false. Because we've become unused to each other, each of us has altered in the course of these four years, years that the others have not lived through. And also because I've changed in many strange ways, and have experienced an incapacity which has long puzzled and tormented me. I've forgotten how to write and even how to talk. It's terrifying how difficult it can be to write a letter, everything is lacking: the calm I need for concentration and ease of expression, and all around there's nothing but obstacles and hindrances. In short, I've become dumb during these war years.

So I've let time pass, as time is needed for everything, and sometimes the right moment comes very late. Perhaps it has come now—I'm writing, I'm writing to you all. I'm writing my first letter. . . . To you, my dear Mother, whom I love beyond all words, to whom goes the totality of my love (the homesickness weighs on me like lead!); to you, dear Bettina, who are grown up now, grown far beyond the picture I have of you, become a woman I don't know, a woman I've never seen, a woman my imagination balks at visualising; to you, dear little Angelika, whom on the other hand I see very clearly, despite your newly acquired seventeen years and although you're doubtless a highly determined and self-assured young woman by now, still I see you, sense you, know how you walk, how you carry yourself, how you look at things, how your grace and charm express themselves, because your character and personality have always been distinctive. Your personal style was already clearly outlined before I left, you were following so straight a path that it's not surprising to think of you now as a complete little person.

So . . . I'M WRITING at last, but how can I best convey to you what these four years have been,

[2] The entry of the Red Army into Sofia, 9 September 1944.

[3] Peter's letter was written in French. But it was a German version subsequently made by his mother for her children and her friends that has been preserved.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what they have meant in terms of thoughts, sorrows, hopes, disappointments, since we were last in touch, since letters stopped and there were only messages, nothing but messages granted us by a cruel world through the mediation of an international charitable organisation. Those messages—twenty-five words at the most—which reached us with a slowness beyond description and after appalling delays. And yet they were all we had, they were our life, our hope, awaited with impatience and anguish as one awaits a verdict—twenty-five miserable words into which we tried to cram a whole world of meaning, an infinity of emotion, an excess of reassurance. How can I describe how long and agonising and unendurable this separation has been for me; how month has followed month, and month piled up on month, without the end coming any nearer; how the years have dragged by heavy with tedium and home-sickness; how the hope the war would end became more and more obsessive; how can I explain, Mother, all that's gone on inside me; my anxiety, my anguish, all the times when I didn't know where you were, my constant longing to help you, to give you support, to run to you if you needed me, all the while knowing, alas, it was impossible; all my love which I wrapped round you as if to protect you, all my hope that I would live to see the day when this way of life would change, when hostilities would end, when I would get in touch with you all again in a normal way and when—blissful thought—I would see you!

Well, that time has now come! Not the great day itself, but the first day, the beginning of the end, the getting in touch with you again. I was in a small French village when I heard people saying, "Our Russian allies have entered Bulgaria and are rapidly advancing." What news! What glorious news! Mother, I was mad with joy! Then I calmed down a bit and examined the information in all its aspects. It wasn't certain yet. I awaited further news with an impatience I can't begin to describe. Some days later it came: Sofia was liberated! You were outside the criminal ring, you were in our world. Free, yes, free; free to speak and receive the truth, free from the oppression you had originally fled but which caught up with you as you were living in an "Axis" country, given over to intellectual servitude (worse than physical violence), to incessant harassment, to the constant threats of an arbitrary and omnipresent power which made your life increasingly precarious and dangerous; finally, free to speak, to speak to me and to hear me.... But doubts, questions and uncertainties are now crowding in on me: are you all right? Are you still all together? And still in the same place? Where is each of you? What has the new constellation of events brought to each of you? Who has Bettina married, what kind of man, and what has he been doing during these years? What are you living on, and how? Are you free from want? Can you communicate with me freely and at once? Can we exchange telegrams, letters, etc.? I've only been able to glean very meagre information about your material conditions, very vague indeed, but not actually disquieting. But that makes it no less vital that you should tell me everything at once, as a first priority!

And now, Mother, I think I must tell you a little about what's been happening to me. So I'll begin with what you already knew before the stage was plunged into darkness....

You knew that ever since the beginning of the War I'd been making innumerable overtures with the idea of enlisting in the Allied armies. And you knew what led me to this decision, which was no more than a natural and logical consequence of my attitudes, unshakable attitudes whose clear and unambiguous conclusions I never hesitated to draw when necessary. No need, then, to hark back to that. You knew my ideas and my way of seeing things, you also knew that at the time of losing contact I had not yet managed to enlist in the British army due to its very stringent regulations forbidding the admission of foreigners—with the exception of those living in Palestine or in England itself. You knew all this because I told you at various times about the steps I was taking and the difficulties I was encountering—which, as I remember, aroused your anxiety because, as you said, I was "too outspoken and not discreet enough."

What you didn't know, but which I'm sure you guessed, was that my efforts finally bore fruit.

In December 1940, I was taken on for the duration of the war as a foreign volunteer with General de Gaulle's Free French Forces—that army, which was tiny at the time, which rejected the armistice and went on with the war side by side with the English. After my acceptance, plus several months of waiting, I was sent at the end of March 1941 to Egypt, where I became a soldier.

So I've been fighting—and it's not yet over—for more than three and a half years, in all the theatres of the war: in Syria against the Vichy army from May to July 1941 (at that time I was still a "greenhorn", a young recruit, and had everything to learn); then in Libya—from January to June 1942—the desert, sand, for long months, thwarted on all fronts, first from one side, then from the other, an eternal monotony, first an advance, then a retreat, then the defence of Tobruk which ended with the fall of Bir-Hakeim. A fortnight's resistance on a small stretch of sand

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

indistinguishable from the rest of the desert, in appalling heat, almost without food, at first with very little water and then with none, under constant bombardment which slowly destroyed the whole position. Then the withdrawal at night of the last survivors under fire from the "Lords" of the Afrika Korps; then Libya again, and then Tunisia. From October 1942 to May 1943, more of the desert—which we knew so well by now, with its leaden heat, its cold nights beneath a vast sky, its wind, its sandstorms, its desperate yet sometimes grandiose monotony—the El Alamein battle, Montgomery's thrust, the great offensive, sustained, implacable: Tobruk, Derna, Benghazi, Tripoli. Then a moment of peace near Tripoli, that city of trees, greenness, and farms, and our drunken delight at the sight of vegetation and luxuriance after so much aridity. Then forward again, the Mareth line, a different landscape, olive groves as far as the eye could see, mountains, towns. Then the battle of Cape Bon, Tunis. Here, another pause. After some comings and goings we left the English 8th army with which we had fought up till now, that desert army of which Churchill said, "If anyone asks where you fought just say 'I was with the 8th army', that's enough!" And then with fresh French reinforcements—involving various changes, but of another kind—we stayed for several months in a small village about ten kilometres from Tunis. . . .

Then the Italian campaign from May to July of this year, the arrival in Naples, the storming of the Gustav line, the thrust across the Hitler line and the great advance right to the north of Rome —I didn't take part in this because I'd been wounded on 16 May during an attack—a slight wound, a bullet in the left shoulder, no complications, total recovery. I spent some weeks in a hospital in the American sector, so was prevented from revisiting Rome, to my bitter disappointment—I had got to know it and love it so much on my journey across Italy on the way to Greece.

And finally France: the great event so long awaited, so ardently desired, the great invasion, the disembarkation on the Côte d'Azur on 16 August, the battles in the direction of Toulon and then in front of Toulon, the pursuit along the valley of the Rhône, through countless towns and villages of Provence, of Lyonnais, of Burgundy, Aix-en-Provence, Arles, Nîmes, Saint-Etienne, Lyon, Chalon-sur-Saône; and then again "somewhere in France", the front, attacks, counter-attacks, patrols, night watches, villages razed to the ground, woods, rain, cold, and on it goes. . . .

BUT THE END IS NEAR. Germany lies before us, not far off, we'll soon be there. . . . It doesn't matter what they do, the barbarians—resist to the last man, hold us here and there, now and then—it won't save them! They're on their last gasp and *our* strength is always growing. The pond is drying up mercilessly—Holland, Luxembourg, Lorraine, Alsace, the Alps as far as Mentone, Memel, East Prussia, Warsaw, Czechoslovakia, Budapest, Yugoslavia, and as far as Greece. . . .

Thirteen capitals have been snatched from them in a few months—Rome, Paris, Luxembourg, Brussels, Helsinki, Reval, Riga, Kovno, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, Athens, and now Budapest. The first large German city, Aachen, is in our hands. Our air attacks grow stronger day by day. . . . Yes, they will be crushed, they will be extinguished if necessary, one town after another; justice will be done. Mankind will have its revenge, it will recover its rights. And the Nazis shall suffer as they have made others suffer, and those who aren't Nazis shall suffer too! For they are all responsible, they are all guilty, except a few, except a tiny minority who chose exile and the struggle for a just cause, or who were unable to flee yet never played the wretched game but resisted all temptation and kept their hands clean. But all the others will pay and pay dear, for they wanted it to be like this, and the day of reckoning is at hand. And also at hand is our liberation, the end of this dog's life, for making war is a dog's life. . . . Believe me, it isn't fun at all in the long run and I personally have had enough of it. I've done what I could and a lot more besides. It's time it ended and we returned to a rational way of life. When it drags on it's just no good. . . . Yes, a few more weeks perhaps, even a few more months, I willingly accept that. And what I want most of all: to enter Berlin! For my satisfaction, for my revenge, so that they can see that I was right! I don't know whether this will be possible, perhaps not, but I want to be there at the precise hour, at the precise moment when the reckoning is made. Then I shall go away again, and never return. You mustn't think, Mother, that I have any regrets. I regret the time that has been wasted, all the years that have been stolen from me and that it won't be easy to make up for, because I'm now nearly thirty. But I don't at all regret having done what I did, it was simply my duty, my duty as a free man for whom certain principles are elementary and the very basis of life. I wouldn't have been able to live with my conscience had I hesitated. It was my duty to take up your defence and contribute to your victory. But we'll discuss all this again, I can't say everything in a first letter. . . .

AND NOW I WANT TO TELL YOU about Ilse and Walter, our rediscovered friends, and my best and dearest friends. It was in the autumn of 1941

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

after the Syrian campaign, that I first saw them again. I had finally succeeded in finding their address in Jerusalem—all rather complicated as I thought they lived in Tel Aviv—and had entered into correspondence with them. Then one fine day I knocked at their door. Ilse opened it, let out her famous cry, and we rushed into each other's arms, wild with joy, inexpressibly happy.... From that moment their house became mine. I spent all my leave with them. And the good old times came back. True friends who you know through and through, long talks where you can say exactly what you like, where there's total reciprocity, where no shade of meaning is too subtle, where prejudices are acknowledged and judgments kind. Light and happy conversation with no dead moments, full of warmth and good will; links deriving from so many common interests and experiences; a similar life style, a similar outlook, that close kinship between people of the same blood.... And so many memories to share! As you know, I was always very fond of Ilse, and we spent the most marvellous hours together. And a true friendship developed between myself and Walter and he helped me over and over again to see things in their true colours. He fought against my innate tendency to manufacture doubts and exaggerated scruples.

It's now over a year since I saw them last and God knows when I shall see them again. In Africa it was easy. I could often get to Palestine. But now from here, from Europe, it's not the same. They're far away now....

As for Liena, well, I haven't forgotten her. My commitment to her was so strong that after more than six years and in spite of everything she's still very much alive in my heart. Her image remains whole and intact, ineffaceable, indestructible, not just conjured up intellectually but—how shall I put it?—almost essential, real, present, omnipresent. I can still lose myself and then rediscover myself in her, only in her if truth be told, although I'm so surely and definitively detached from her. If I can talk on another level I move and have my being with her somewhere where everything expands, dilates in the infinite and universal and where she becomes herself in some impersonal way. It's difficult to explain but perhaps you'll understand. I hope to see her again, *I shall* see her again.

And I'll see others too—my father, for instance. But I'm not thinking about that yet, I don't want to think about it yet, I forbid myself this sort of anticipation. I don't like groping in the dark. I know nothing about him. We shall see.

And now tell me about Grandmother. Is she still alive? And if so, where is she? I've already asked you this question once, and you gave me the laconic reply: "No news for a year." I couldn't pursue the point in my brief messages, but now I shall: how is it possible that you haven't had any news? And, more important, how is it possible that you left her there all alone, abandoned her, knowing full well what it would mean? Had she been deported like the others? Couldn't you really have got hold of her, taken her to you? "No news"! but, good God, you managed to get away, all three of you, and she, poor old woman, had to stay there alone, with no help, perhaps with no money. I can't understand it. When I think she has met the same fate as so many others and that it could have been avoided, I go mad!

AND YOU SEE, Mother, what they've done to our own people, to all the Jews who hadn't a chance to get away—what they've done to them in the Polish camps and in the ghettos! What those Huns have done, those Germans, those representatives of their people, men from every class, from the north and the south, of every complexion and character! How they've tortured, massacred, systematically exterminated, coldly annihilated! It demands the most terrible vengeance. Those responsible for these atrocities will be judged. But who is responsible? The nation whence such creatures emerged; the spirit and blood of this nation; the human community which allowed such things to exist, to live, to grow, to act, to flourish.

Who is responsible? The nation, of course, which gives itself such leaders, perfect representatives of the general vileness, and which chooses them because it recognises itself in them. Yes, they have all recognised themselves: the killers, the assassins of Lublin and the gas chambers, the thousands of killers who coldly shot, mowed down, gassed, buried alive, burnt alive; the populace who followed or preceded the killers, the populace who broke windows, pillaged houses, ill-treated, humiliated, beat up; and then those who didn't know, who didn't want to know, who let things take their course, who chastely lowered their eyelids while they washed their hands; and finally the mass, the great indifferent mass of "decent chaps", indifferent to the ignominy, the outrage, the radical and irreparable evil that was being done to other men.

Yes, a whole people is to blame, to blame because of its mentality, its spiritual attitude, its indolence, its apathy, its contempt for true civilisation, its inability to control its instincts, its innate barbarism, sometimes hidden and sometimes unleashed, which turns a German into a Hun. If Hitler had been dealing with honest men he would have remained what he was

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—a charlatan. But he knew who he was singing his dirty songs for, and we know too—for the dirty *Boches*; and they responded in chorus and in unison because he touched them in the depths of their souls, he touched them where they were evil and terrible, where his call awakened a thousand echoes. . . .

I MUST STOP. This letter has been written over several days and with many interruptions. I began it under rain, near a stove, went on with it during a few precious hours of peace and warmth, and now am finishing it under snow. We have attacked and are now occupying a new position at an altitude of seven hundred metres. It's cold, cold, cold. We live in holes scooped out of the snow and it's a real feat to write with such numbed and frozen hands. How I regret leaving the hot cities of the East and of Africa, following one after another along the shores of the Mediterranean, landmarks in my war: Beirut, Damascus, Tripoli, Sfax, Sousse, Tunis, Algiers, Casablanca. But no, I regret nothing; because now I'm nearer than ever to you. The War is coming to an end and soon I'll descend from my snowy throne. Meanwhile, I've been able to write you a long letter, and that's quite an achievement. Oh Mother, I feel it can't last much longer now, I'm sure I'll see you soon, very soon, you and Bettina and Angelika. What else can I say? How can I speak of things that fill me with such inexpressible happiness, like a great warm wave? Everything inside me is expectation, love. . . .

Take care of yourselves, my loved ones, and wait just a little while longer. You're safe now. I needn't worry any more, need I? Tell me, Mother, that I needn't worry! Write at once! Tell me everything! I know so little about you. . . .

Goodbye for the moment, my dear ones. I say goodbye for the moment because it surely won't be long now, it can't be long now. We've held out for years, we've held out well, but now it really must stop. Goodbye for the moment, my dearest ones, everything is bathed in huge hope. . . .

I love you, I kiss you all over and over again
You, Mother
You, Bettina
You, Angelika
Peter

Peter Schwiefert was killed in Alsace, two kilometres from the Rhine, on 7 January 1945, about five weeks after sending the above letter. By the time his mother received the letter he had already been dead for six months. She did not know this. She answered it the next day.[4]

Sofia, 1 July 1945

PETER, my little Peter, I can't write to you in the sort of French I would like. It's so difficult to tell you all my love in a language that isn't my own. If only I could speak French as well as you!

Listen—yesterday morning, 30 June, I was in bed, I was daydreaming and I was thinking that if someone came and asked me what I'd like best for my birthday, I would say, a letter from Peter. An hour later there was a ring at the bell and the postman brought me your long letter, the first for four years!

Never have I received such a beautiful and moving letter! I'm wild with love and admiration and longing. I felt, you are my son, you belong entirely to me. You think my thoughts, feel my feelings, speak my language. I love my daughters as much as you, but they are of another kind. I'm afraid they don't love me any more, as you do, and they don't understand me as you understand me. They're always in revolt. Bettina is always against me, or perhaps she's like that just to frustrate me. You know her, she has hardened herself so as never to show her soft heart. Angelika is a severe critic and sometimes she's right. In any case they're both very different from me, different in their inmost being, in their temperament, in their outlook on life. They have no respect for me and I'm often the object of their sarcasm. They get angry, and rightly, when I shout and lose my temper. As you know, that's always been my great fault. I often shouted at you. And I regret every word that wasn't a word of love. That I should be irritable nowadays can perhaps be understood and forgiven. But even in the past

[4] His mother learned the news of her son's death a fortnight later, through a letter from Ilse Hirsch. He was buried in the military cemetery of Chatenois in Alsace, but his body was later moved. Notification of this was sent to Bettina from the *Ministère des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre* (Ministry for ex-Service Men and War Victims) in a letter dated 10 February 1972. The text ran as follows:

"Madame, you have expressed a desire to know the burial place of your brother, the soldier Peter Schwiefert, born in Berlin on 5 January 1917. . . . I have the honour to inform you that the mortal remains of this soldier who "died for France" on 7 January 1945 in the Benfeld region (Lower Rhine) repose in the military cemetery of Strasbourg-Kronenburg (Lower Rhine), grave number 24, row 5, section E. Please accept. . . ." Signed illegible, director of the Office of National Cemeteries and the Restitution of Bodies (Bureau des Nécropoles nationales et des Restitutions de Corps).

A few months ago Angelika and Claude Lanzmann went to Strasbourg-Kronenburg, where they duly found Peter's grave. At the head of the grave was a cross, and the identity disc affixed to it was incorrectly spelled: *Schwerrert* instead of *Schwiefert*. They did what was necessary regarding both the spelling and the cross.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when we were all together, when I had all my children around me, and my friends, and my music, and my books, and there were no worries, even then I was often bad-tempered, irritable, ungrateful when I should have been happy, kind and grateful to all of you. And that has to be paid for, my little Peter, and it's only fair that it should be. I behaved badly, selfishly, I neglected my duties even towards my children though I loved them so much. Why am I telling you all this? Because after receiving your letter I want to ask your forgiveness, my dear Peter. Because I'm afraid you love me too much and I don't deserve it. Because when I think about the past I see only my faults, and it tortures me.

That's that. Now I want to talk about you. You've become a man now, you've suffered more than me, you've shown that you knew not only how to write fine phrases but how to risk your life for an ideal. And you've proved your immense attachment to your mother and your grandparents who loved us so much. How small I feel beside them and you! I can't explain everything in this letter. We shall have a long talk about all these things later, shan't we, my little Peter?

I've had a letter from Ilse saying that the last communication she had from you was a telegram from Paris. It said that you wanted to get me to Jerusalem so that we could see each other. Since then she's had no news and nor have I. We are so terribly frightened! I've sent you endless letters and cards through the French and English Consulates—I didn't know where you were, I thought you were still in Jerusalem or Syria. I had your military address, but knew nothing.[5] But now I know! God spared me four years of anguish and torment. But why haven't we had any news of you for six months? You had been through so much danger, you'd been wounded, and yet you wrote. Now that the War is over, you are silent. But the War went on from November to May. I'm so frightened, Peter!

SO YOU NEVER REALISED what they did to Grandmother? They deported her to Poland, like all the others, and we've had no news of her since 1943. The first to go were Marie and Evchen. Then all the others—the Habermanns, the Hirsches, all. Ernst Saulman and his mother committed suicide, and many others did the same. Your father helped as much as he could, he kept his hands clean. You don't mention Erich, and I know quite well why. But he was very good to Grandmother and to all of us.

You shower me with reproaches about Grandmother, but, Peter, I couldn't have brought her here. It was out of the question. I myself was only able to leave Germany, as you know, because I contracted a marriage of convenience. We hadn't any passports and in no circumstances would they have let my mother leave. But what's the use of talking about it now, Peter? I shall never understand how such things were able to happen. I shall never understand men. The guilty will be punished, they must pay the price, but even if there were a punishment equal to the measure of their crimes it will not bring the dead back to life.

You can't think how often I've pictured the end of the War to myself, the end of the Nazis. And now to my amazement it has actually come, just as I dreamed of it and longed for it, with all my being. I always firmly believed it would come, and yet I sometimes doubted, because it's so seldom that reality ever corresponds to our wild expectations! Like you, I've dreamed of revenge. I wanted to take revenge on everyone who had hurt me, humiliated me, taken everything away from me—my son, my mother, my husband, my country—everyone who'd made my children unhappy and made me make them unhappy, my children whom I love more than the whole world. I minded that most. Yet in spite of everything, I now want to fight against my desire for revenge, I don't want to hate any more. What I would like is to work in my fatherland[6] with the Allies, and for them. I know the country, the language, I've learnt how to work, how to live cheaply, how to want nothing but a little peace and quiet. I ask for one thing only: not to have to be frightened any more and not to have to live alone in a foreign country. And first and foremost I want to have my three children safe and sound and happy and out of danger. I'd like to have them with me, it's the prayer I say night and morning.

My darling Peter, I take you in my arms, I hold you to me, I'm proud of you, my little one.

Mother

The children kiss you. Angelika wants you to come. Will you come, Peter? Sometimes I just can't go on. It was all too much. I see nothing but darkness. If only you could come. . . .

© *Search Press 1976*

[5] Peter's Red Cross messages were always sent from Jerusalem. They were written either by Peter himself (when he was there on leave), or more often, by Ilse Hirsch, or again they were typewritten. And his mother answered Ilse's. So, contrary to what Peter thought, she had never realised that he was in the armed forces. It was not until March 1945, that Ilse—worried about Peter's silence, and communication with Bulgaria having been reestablished—wrote to his mother for the first time. She told her that Peter was a soldier and gave her his military address, otherwise she tried to be vague so as not to alarm her. It was from this time that the mother tried by all possible means to enter into communication with her son.

[6] Peter's mother uses the word *patrie* here.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Peter Porter

An Angel in Blythburgh Church

Shot down from its enskied formation,
This stern-faced plummet rests against the wall;
Cromwell's soldiers peppered it and now the death-
watch beetle has it in thrall.

If you make fortunes from wool, along
The weeping winter foreshores of the tide,
You build big churches with clerestories
And place angels high inside.

Their painted faces guard and guide. Now or
Tomorrow or whenever is the promise—
The resurrection comes: fix your eyes halfway
Between Heaven and Diss.

The face is crudely carved, simplified by wind;
It looks straight at God and waits for orders,
Buffeted by the organ militant, and blasted
By choristers and recorders.

Faith would have our eyes as wooden and as certain.
It might be worth it, to start the New Year's hymn
Allowing for death as a mere calculation,
A depreciation, entered in.

Or so I fancy looking at the roof beams
Where the dangerous beetle sails. What is it
Turns an atheist's mind to prayer in almost
Any church on a country visit?

Greed for love or certainty or forgiveness?
High security rising with the sea birds?
A theology of self-looking for precedents?
A chance to speak old words?

Rather, I think of a woman lying on her bed
Staring for hours up to the ceiling where
Nothing is projected—death the only angel
To shield her from despair.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

R.V. Bailey

Not my best side

Not my best side, I'm afraid.
The artist didn't give me a chance to
Pose properly, and as you can see,
Poor chap, he had this obsession with
Triangles, so he left off two of my
Feet. I didn't comment at the time
(What, after all, are two feet
To a monster?) but afterwards
I was sorry for the bad publicity.
Why, I said to myself, should my conqueror
Be so ostentatiously beardless, and ride
A horse with a deformed neck and square hoofs?
Why should my victim be so
Unattractive as to be inedible,
And why should she have me literally
On a string? I don't mind dying
Ritually, since I always rise again,
But I should have liked a little more blood
To show they were taking me seriously.

II
It's hard for a girl to be sure if
She wants to be rescued. I mean, I quite
Took to the dragon. It's nice to be
Liked, if you know what I mean. He was
So nicely physical, with his claws
And lovely green skin, and that sexy tail,
And the way he looked at me,
He made me feel he was all ready to
Eat me. And any girl enjoys that.
So when this boy turned up, wearing machinery,
On a really *dangerous* horse, to be honest
I didn't much fancy him. I mean,
What was he like underneath the hardware?
He might have acne, blackheads or even
Bad breath for all I could tell, but the dragon—
Well, you could see all his equipment
At a glance. Still, what could I do?
The dragon got himself beaten by the boy,
And a girl's got to think of her future.

III
I have diplomas in Dragon
Management and Virgin Reclamation.
My horse is the latest model, with
Automatic transmission and built-in
Obsolescence. My spear is custombuilt,
And my prototype armour
Still on the secret list. You can't
Do better than me at the moment.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I'm qualified and equipped to the
Eyebrow. So why be difficult?
Don't you want to be killed and/or rescued
In the most contemporary way? Don't
You want to carry out the roles
That sociology and myth have designed for you?
Don't you realise that, by being choosy,
You are endangering job prospects
In the spear- and horse-building industries?
What, in any case, does it matter what
You want? You're in my way.

John Mole

The Precinct

The precinct's new recorderie displays
Slouching torsos wired to the latest craze.

Gob-stopper lollipops and flavoured gum—
Slack mouths in motion. Let the climax come.

Albums filed like evidence of crime.
The children of the free are doing time

As time, of course, is doing them although
Only a fool would dare to tell them so.

"Man is in love and loves what vanishes"—
"Hey, baby, cool it!" Lieutenant Kojak says

"What vanishes? What vanishes is dross.
Don't give me that. Wise up and cut your loss."

His shaved head bulges on a record sleeve.
Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

A klaxon shrieks its warning down the street
"I am the maker you've prepared to meet.

The station waits for all of you. The stars
Twinkle like cookies through thick iron bars."

The discs are spun, the pick-ups disengage,
The decks are cleared. Not Heaven in a rage

But Nowhere, Never. Life's out in the cold.
The children of the free grow up, grow old.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CINEMA

Mythmash

By John Weightman

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH has landed in our midst as a large and glossy package, trailing clouds of borrowed glory from David Bowie's pop career, even for those of us who knew nothing about him except his name. Appropriately enough, he himself turns out to be a sort of other-worldly creature, etiolated almost to transparency, as if he had been blanched by some galactic process, and he belongs to neither human gender, being feminine in his masculinity and masculine in his femininity. The film opens promisingly with interstellar noises and vistas and the enormous plop of some space-capsule coming down in a remote lake. When, from this cosmic commotion, there emerges pale, copper-haired Bowie, groping his way over the rough American landscape with the delicate hesitancy of a fallen angel, one is filled with pleasant anticipation. At last, a poetic treatment of modern culture from an extraterrestrial point of view! At last, a genuine imaginative leap to refresh the spirit!

There were signs, in *Performance*, that Nicholas Roeg sensed the complexities of the modern consciousness as it oscillates between the sexes, between subject and object, between knowledge and non-knowledge. His second film, *Don't Look Now*, was disappointing in its content—a routine, neo-Gothic, Daphne du Maurier tale of the supernatural—but it showed extraordinary pictorial awareness and a mastery of narrative technique. One could therefore reasonably expect that *The Man Who Fell To Earth* might combine cinematographic flair with psychological insight in a thoroughly accomplished way. But alas no; once again, it would seem, a talent, instead of ripening, has gone off slightly, made rank by the wealth of modern cinematographic possibilities or by the undisciplined tumult in the scriptwriter's mind. *The Man Who Fell To Earth* is full of brilliant images, but it hesitates between various mythic concepts, so that it is not so much one film as a mixture of two or three, none of which is fully realised.

I DON'T KNOW WHICH of the three principal themes of the film predominated in the minor science-fiction novel used by Paul Mayersburg as a basis for the scenario. What is obvious is that they are not compatible. Thomas Jerome Newton, the character impersonated by Bowie, cannot be simultaneously (a) an emissary from another planet who has provided himself with an English identity to carry out a mission on earth (b) a Christ-figure whose sufferings are in some way exemplary and (c) an Icarus who fails to fly off again. Of course, the historical Christ—supposing we take his existence for granted—provided himself with a Jewish identity, but he emanated from God or Heaven, not from another planet, and his mission could, at a pinch, be said to make sense for anyone prepared to accept the postulate of the God/Man tension; moreover, according to the usually accepted sources, his return flight presented no problem. But Mr Roeg's film secularises this pattern in an incomprehensible way.

We are gradually given to understand that Thomas J. Newton has left his highly evolved planet because it is suffering from a severe drought. Presumably he has come to find water, but the interesting problem of how he is going to get it back from earth is never broached. Is it going to be atomised and beamed across space? Why, in any case, cannot a sophisticated culture synthesise H_2O, if the component elements exist on its planet? At first, I thought that the absence of water might be metaphorical; a more evolved planet could have gone further than ours in the direction of spiritual dryness, and might feel the need to slake its thirst on our relative primitiveness, as industrialised European nations take a sentimental interest in pastoral societies. But this supposition had to be abandoned. In the initial scenes, Mr Bowie drinks ordinary earth water with a religious concentration and simplicity, and keeps asking for it significantly. The "water of life" is, then, just water. Besides, we are given glimpses of his unhappy wife and children tottering about on their parched planet in their space-suits—the nuclear family in dire distress.

To refer again to the Christian parallel, I have always found it difficult to imagine what might be going on in the Christian Other World, but this planet was every bit as puzzling. It appeared to have no inhabitants except the one family. In what factory had their space-suits been made? How could there be any *natives* on a planet where space-suits had constantly to be worn? How did Mr Thornton-Bowie get off this planet, when the only visible means of communication was a quaint monorail vehicle? Were we supposed to laugh? Ha, Ha, these space-dwellers are no more convincing than any others to be seen in T.V. serials, which go on repeating *Ivanhoe* or *Rob Roy* among the galaxies. But Ha, Ha of any sort would have conflicted with the reverent treatment of Mr Bowie/Christ's dilemma on earth.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HE ARRIVES WITH A SHEAF of advanced scientific formulae, which he hands over to a business-lawyer who, almost immediately, converts them into a money-spinning set of patents, managed by a multinational corporation called World Enterprises. Thornton/Bowie thereupon, for no very obvious reason, turns into a millionaire-recluse, living in a luxurious lakeside villa and contemplating the wickedness of our human condition on a panel of nine or so television screens, all showing different programmes. He occasionally clasps his head in anguish, as if mere consciousness of the earthly state were in itself a crown of thorns. In his solitude, he is attended by a devoted slave-like character, Mary-Lou, a hotel maid with whom he has become acquainted through the coincidence that she was there to pick him up when he fainted in the hotel lift.

Why, you may ask, should he be so affected by a hotel lift when he has descended in a space-capsule? To which I would reply that he needs to faint so that she can carry him along the hotel corridor in a parody of the Descent from the Cross and tend his body as gently as if it bore the stigmata. Why, you may further ask, should he have what appears to be a sexual relationship with a human woman if, as is made quite obvious, his genital apparatus, like his general appearance, is just somethiing he has adopted for the duration of his earthly mission? On his remote planet, procreation must have been achieved by some other means. Well, it has been argued that Christ was ambiguous too, and He had a touching encounter with Mary Magdalen. At one point, Bowie/Christ reveals his otherwordly, inhuman, genderless nature to Mary-Lou, and she at first literally wets her knickers with fright, then overcomes her repugnance and strokes the mysterious, heavenly absence with wonderment. This is another variation on the intriguing question: does God have a penis, and if so, what is its purpose? which was implicit in Pasolini's *Theorem*, as well as in *Godspell* and in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. No doubt, a pop-star pseudo-Christ has to be at once sexy, bisexual and supersexual, so as to cater simultaneously for all possible needs.

THE ONE INTERESTING EMBRYO of a structure I can discern in this film is that divine Bowie/Christ, who partakes only reluctantly and fastidiously of sex, is contrasted with an earthy science-professor who has two passions, his work (at which, however, he is elementary compared with Bowie/Christ) and fornication with his girl-students. There is a wild erotic sequence at the beginning of the film, in which the professor copulates with an eighteen-year-old, who manages at the same time to hang on to a polaroid camera which "shoots" their various poses. This corresponds to a similar sequence towards the end, in which Bowie/Christ and Mary-Lou, naked on a bed, execute comparable movements, while Bowie fires blanks from a revolver, as if to make up for his lack of genital conclusiveness. This might, conceivably, be an ironical comment on the relative advantages of the human and the divine; Bowie/Christ is a wizard scientist, intellectually away ahead of the professor, and he can also move through different time zones, glimpsing events in America's past history, but he is not as densely potent on the animal level as his earthly counterpart.

I am not sure of this interpretation, but then I am not sure that this image-packed film is meant to be interpretable at all. However, what I have just proposed would fit in with one reading of the second half. Bowie/Space-traveller decides, with the help of the professor, to switch all the energies of World Enterprises to building a rocket that will take him back to his planet, presumably without water, but no matter, since the water theme has now been forgotten. The activities of his multinational corporation have aroused hostility at the United Nations, particularly among certain black leaders. He is kidnapped, held in confinement and more or less tortured in a luxurious half-ruin, the nooks and crannies of which the camera explores voluptuously, although why this prison should be a picturesque half-ruin is another incidental point that remains obscure. At the same time, his chief business collaborators are defenestrated from a sky-scraper and curve down towards the street in Icarus-like postures; nudge, nudge, the famous picture of the fall of Icarus has been shown more than once in the interior scenes. Bowie-Christ is now a tarnished angel, unable to soar above the earthly mess, defeated by the world which holds him in thrall, and reduced to playing ping-pong and gun-sex with Mary-Lou. Eventually, he is released and just sits about in cafés getting quietly sozzled, having by now long since given up the pure water of life in favour of alcohol. One final touch to illustrate further the secularisation of Christ's Passion—he remains physically unaltered, whereas all the people associated with him grow rapidly older; he will suffer on earth until the end of time, since he also exists in the supernatural dimension of eternal youth; Christ, being the link between time and eternity, is amongst us until the Day of Judgment.

I WOULD SAY that *Theorem* was a more enjoyable film, because it had a naïve, preposterous shape, dictated by the simpler mixture of obsessions operating in Pasolini's mind. Pasolini's film

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is, in fact, impressively bad, since it has a kind of gut-awfulness amounting almost to a negative quality. In the case of Roeg, one feels that the eye is more lively than the sensual or emotional centre, and is endlessly greedy for images that it cannot wholly digest into an aesthetic or metaphysical pattern, either good or bad. The explanation is, I suppose, that Roeg, being more intelligent, and sophisticated than Pasolini was, has merely dabbled in this mythmash without really believing in it on any level. But, in bad art as in good, you probably have to believe in order to be effective.

Ceremony

The Old Fox glimpses the little bag passing
Furtively round. They are secretly
Collecting for him in the office, he is going to retire.

The little bag, something tells him, will be light;
Not with an excess of paper money either.
The Old Fox is not popular where he works.
The typists have given 2p, the Under Manager
Ten, the Manager puts in a fifty
And takes out thirty-eight.
. . . It might not reach two pounds.

For forty-three years' service, two pounds or less!
The Old Fox cogitates quietly at his desk
(So quietly not even his secretary divines
He is cogitating at all.)
Well, he could act the martyr, he could break down and weep
In front of the whole staff at his presentation.
He could make an acerbic speech and scathe the lot.

He could, out of humility, refuse
To have them make such a fuss of him: "Forty-three
Years in so happy a firm seems not so long."
But he has another idea.

The Old Fox knows where they keep
The key of the cupboard where the little bag
Is hidden in a teapot at night.
The evening before,
On a pretence of tidying up loose ends,
He stays altruistically late, the last to leave,
He fetches the key, he opens the cupboard,
He takes out the bag,
And he puts in the sixteen five pound notes he has
drawn in the lunch hour
Through the youngest clerk in the bank.

At his presentation next day, the Old Fox
Breaks down and gratefully weeps in front of the
whole staff.

Alan Brownjohn

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES & TOPICS

European Notebook

On the Death of Pasolini

By François Bondy

WHEN PIER Paolo Pasolini was brutally murdered here by a casual homosexual pick-up in a suburb of Rome it immediately became a crime which the majority of Italian left-wing intellectuals insisted had some dark under-cover political motive. At about the same time Pasolini's last film, based on de Sade's *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom*, became the subject of violent discussion and a target for the local censor. As a result the writer and film-director has hardly been referred to except in connection with something horrific or scandalous. This will pass. Several of Pasolini's last books have just been published; some are new works and others new editions, but taken together they do provide an occasion to consider the best of Pasolini, poet and essayist.

Einaudi has published a small volume, *La Divina Mimesis* (echoing the "Divine Comedy"), which concentrates on the depravities and wickednesses of present-day capitalist society following the "Inferno." Garzanti has produced three volumes of poetry, the collected Italian poems making a handsome 700-page book; there is also a thin paperback containing three well-know sets of poems, "Gramsci's Ashes", "Religion in My Time" and "Poetry in Roses", together with—most important of all—"La Nuova Gioventu"; the latter is written primarily in the dialect of Friuli interspersed, in the case of the later 1974 poems, with poetry in standard Italian. Garzanti has also published a collection of essays, *Scritti Corsari* (*Writings of a Pirate*), sub-titled "The Most Controversial Views of a Provocative Observer."

The poems in dialect seem to me to be admirable. "Furlano" was not Pasolini's mother tongue, but his mother's dialect. He himself only learnt it, including its different local variations, after the family had been evacuated from Bologna during the War to the village of Casarsa near Udine. As with his use in his later novels of the lower-class Roman dialect, Pasolini regarded the language of Friuli (which sounds not unlike Provençal and has echoes of Venetian) as something authentic, as a method of enrichment of the standard language, now so colourless and abstract. Use of the Friuli dialect was also a tribute to his mother (whose other son had been killed by Tito's partisans) with whom Pier Paolo Pasolini lived all his life. Pasolini's use of dialect may be taken as a protest against the severance from the past, against his uprooting.

Pasolini selected and wrote the preface for the collection of essays, and fortunately he did not include the numerous articles which he has written in the previous year for the *Corriere della Sera* demanding a spectacular "People's Trial" of the Christian Democrats, arguing that they should be brought to book, not only for corruption but for promoting "a soul-destroying consumer society." The other essays are replete with provocative eccentricities, studded with reasonable insights and wild illogicalities; in contrast to those of his newspaper polemics most of them contain an element of perspicacity and are not advanced solely in a Friend/Foe context. Pasolini always mourned for the lost archaic Italy which he pictured as a Franciscan idyll. It is a nostalgia which is shared by many present-day Italians—Alberto Moravia, for instance—though they all describe it differently. Pasolini abhorred "modern development" which seemed to him misdirected, although he had no clear alternative to propose. As a romantic revolutionary he was rather closer to Rousseau than to Marx, although he liked to call himself a Marxist and hoped for salvation from a fresh generation of communists; at the same time, however, he poured scorn on Communist theories and attacked the Party's ideological orthodoxy. Pasolini became increasingly unsure of the real dialectical meaning of history, and indeed of his own radical commitment, which became more and more frenetic and, in the end, he fancied it all to be a kind of game. I suspect that he sensed that the sources of his poetic inspiration were drying up; and he bemoaned the fact that in this self-alienated Italy, devastated by progress, a writer had to become a linguistic island unto himself.

PASOLINI ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED that he held religious views in the early Christian sense. It was no accident that one of Italy's Catholic institutions awarded a prize to his scabrous film *Teorama*. His spirit was caught in theological

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

despair rather than in plain paganism. Many of his later poems are, unfortunately, hard to translate without losing their real essence; they are no more than prose divided into verses and were really part of his journalistic activities. In one of the poems of the series entitled "Murky Enthusiasm", Pasolini pictures himself and his friends being condemned by Orthodox Marxists (inverting a famous Brecht scene in *Die Massnahme*), and he holds them up to ridicule with the verdict which he puts into their mouths. It begins as follows:

> Severe sentence must be pronounced on those who
> believe in kindly affections and innocence.
> Equally severe sentence must be pronounced on
> anyone who
> loves the sub-proletariat and who therefore
> has no class-conscousness.
> Particularly severe sentence must be passed on
> anyone who
> detects these dark scandalous emotions in himself
> and gives expression to them.
>
> The words of condemnation began to be heard
> midway in the Fifties and are still resounding.
> Meanwhile: innocence, which in fact existed,
> has begun to lose itself in corruption, denials,
> neuroses.
> Meanwhile: the sub-proletariat, which in fact
> existed,
> has become the reservoir of the lower middle class.

There are nine further "stanzas", if that term can be applied to them. The interest, however, lies in what he was trying to say. Pasolini regarded the "sub-proletariat" as the People; in his eyes the organised working class had already become accomplices of the new Consumer-Capitalism, in which a sense of community no longer existed. He referred to *consumismo* as a new form of "fascism" which he felt to be far worse than the old one because it levelled millions of Italians to the same standard and demoralised them, whereas the old fascism had been merely a veneer which never penetrated deep into the masses and so did not ruin them.

Many of Pasolini's earlier provocative statements had shocked Italians but they had also sparked off pertinent discussion. In 1968, for instance, when during the student revolts he wrote a long poem saying that he himself was wholeheartedly on the side of the police! They were, after all, "sons of the People" as opposed to the pampered sons of the bourgeoisie who were now playing at revolution. The last few months of Pasolini's life was marked by angry polemics with his friends, with Moravia (with whom he had edited the newspaper *Nuovi Argumenti*), with Italo Calvino and with Natalia Ginzburg.

I SOMEHOW FIND the comparison with Norman Mailer apt. Mailer also liked punching left and right, and curiously associated brawling with an ideology of mysticism; Mailer once wrote a violent pamphlet against his girl-friends in "Women's Lib." Pasolini could be found campaigning *against* the law, supported by the whole Italian Left, for the legalisation of abortion, basing his case not only on the sanctity of life but on the fact that every man retains in his subconscious something of his pre-natal history.

The Left, including certain leading bourgeois newspapers which are now edited by left-wingers, replied to Pasolini with conventional formulations, accusing him of lack of sound insight into social problems and indeed the laws of history; and in response he would confess his immaturity, his permanent youthfulness. He even confessed to "*mammismo*", the Mother-cult now so taboo and scorned in Italy. In one of his poems he wrote that for him his mother was the only woman and his only love.

No one was more conscious of the poet's irrationality, often carried to absurd lengths, than Pasolini himself. His ideas will not be remembered; but memorable is his mistrust of the new-fangled Italian rationality, now in possession of final clarities; and this will possibly remain as a provocation and a vexation. I think that, on balance, he provoked his friends more than he did his enemies. He accused the anti-fascists of being fascists themselves; he pointed out that young fascists were in no way different from young anti-fascists in physiognomy, physique, fashion or foolishness. Those who referred to fascists as if they were quite another race of Italians, he said, were just unable to see themselves. He also ridiculed the Left for substituting for a real knowledge of class a merely rhetorical class-consciousness. Pasolini was a very embarrassing fellow. He might have played the role of revolutionary court jester had he possessed any kind of sense of humour. Still his desperation was no play-acting, no pose.

PASOLINI was a figure who could at once elicit anger and admiration. He longed for a communist victory and at the same time feared an insipid, slogan-filled, conformist future. Nevertheless the smooth self-assured counter-arguments continuously hurled at him by the disciples of History and Progress, their rigid dialectics unruffled by any self-questioning, have a less human ring about them than Pasolini's poems or prose.

How hostile was Pasolini's supposed "hostility to the consumer"? Three of his films, *Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales* and *The Thousandth and First Night*, made considerable concessions to his audience and were definitely commercial box-office successes. In his preface to the scripts,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

however—one of the last things he wrote which was published posthumously—he dissociated himself from these films and hinted that he was going to try to regain his capacity as an artist by retreating to write another novel. His *Ragazzi di vita* has a permanent place in present-day Italian literature, and it is saddening that since his death most references to Pasolini should have been concerned solely with so disastrous, even on the purely technical level, a film as *Salo and the 120 days of Sodom*. Pasolini here is neither erotic nor sensual. The ponderous obscenity of his travesty of a film version of the "divine Marquis" gives an oddly dilettante impression. So do the explicit references to literature about de Sade (from Simone de Beauvoir to Roland Barthes), and the quotations from Nietzsche in the mouths of mediocre fascist dignitaries have an unintentionally grotesque ring about them, as if the director had felt that he had to legitimise his interest in the subject by highfalutin' intellectual allusions. As for his vaunted uncompromising radicalism, Pasolini was not quite bold enough to picture the final "blood cycle", the torturing to death, except in miniature through an observer's telescope.

If pornography is a matter of lubricity and sexual stimulation and not of horror and evil, then the *120 Days* need only be banned for addicts of "coprophilia." For other viewers a government health warning that during the film they might well be overcome by nausea would be sufficient, especially if cinema managers (as John Weightman once suggested) would thoughtfully provide little air-sick bags under every seat.

All this may not quite be necessary. The controversial film has already fallen foul of the censor in several countries. Who will fight for it? It certainly cannot qualify either as a kind of Brechtian "*Lehrstück*" on the relationship between Fascism and Sadism, even less so than that other controversial Italian film, *The Night Porter*, could be taken as a serious inquiry into modern masochism (a woman who becomes the post-War sexual captive of one of her tormentors in a concentration camp).

The trouble with Pasolini was that he endowed his villains, all mediocre lower-middle-class dignitaries, with an overflow of imagination, with intricate obsessions and with an *avant-garde* erudition—they portray Sade because they have studied him (and Beauvoir, Barthes, *etc.*) in such detail!—whereas in fact the most apt comment on the subject is that of Hannah Arendt: "the banality of evil." The impression persists—and it is reinforced for me by a book of memoirs recently published by one of the Italian actors in the film—that as a film director Pasolini was transferring his own erotic fantasies and obsessions to the screen with vast self-indulgence and no artistic self-criticism at all. The supposedly political and social context was no more than a contrived studio setting.

By my count Pasolini made at least twelve films which were incomparably better than this posthumous production. I prefer not to regard it as the "last will and testament" of the artist but only as a helpless expression of the man's personal (and ideological) crisis. Still, it remains his "last word." The tragic, vicious, violent aspect of his death in Rome had been imagined and protrayed in both his films and his novels, and was indeed inherent in the way of "living dangerously" at the mercy of a *Ragazzo di morte*.

A View

Snow fills the square this fine morning
Masking the features of the fountain statue.
Pigeons worry the careful blue shadows
And religion parades the square this morning.

Here are two handmaids of God in dark habits
And linen hats prepared for pure flight.

And here comes God himself with a priest and boy—
A last sacrament in a small receptacle hurrying
To someone declining from the fineness of the morning.

Freda Downie

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A substantial and noteworthy attempt to introduce Sufi ideas to the West and indicate their relevance to contemporary life.
Choice (Association of College and Research Libraries)

Authoritative work.
Sunday Times

Eminently readable.
New York Times

The first fully authoritative book on Sufism and the human-development system of the 'dervishes'.
Afghanistan News

Definitive work on the source of the whole tradition.
Walter Lang, *Evening News*

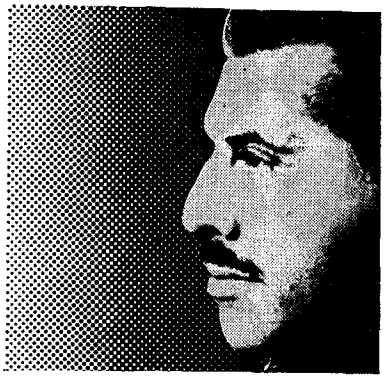
. . . a scholarly work . . . concerned with the 'method'.
Books & Bookmen

The Sufis
by Idries Shah

Important historically and culturally.
Robert R. Kirsch, *Los Angeles Times*

Learned and good-humoured . . . a patient vastness of learning and exposition.
The Observer

. . . the definitive statement of Sufism for the time and as such will be wanted by most academic libraries serving the needs of Orientalists and students of comparative religion.
R. H. Dundas, *Library Journal*



Photograph of IDRIES SHAH by John Pole.

THE SUFIS is published by Jonathan Cape, London.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & WRITERS

A Case of Mistaken Identity

Keywords—By R. W. BURCHFIELD

FEBRUARY AND MARCH were instructive months this year. At the beginning of February, Professor Raymond Williams's *Keywords*[1] was published, described by the author as

> not a dictionary or glossary of a particular academic subject . . . [and] not a series of footnotes to dictionary histories or definitions of a number of words. It is, rather, the record of an enquiry into a *vocabulary*: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as *culture* and *society*.

Christopher Hill (*New Society*, 5 February) decided that the book was "illuminated . . . by insights from Williams's own wide reading", and used as illustration a sentence from Milton's *Paradise Lost* that Williams drew not from wide reading but from the entry for the word *equality* (reproduced in miniature form in *Keywords*) in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Woodrow Wyatt (*Sunday Times*, 8 February) asserted that the book "really is excellent and penetrating", and then strayed into strange irrelevance about a singularly unattractive word-coinage of his own. Philip Toynbee (*Observer*, 1 February) constructed a hypothetical sentence containing 25 of the 110 words discussed by Raymond Williams, and went on to say, *inter alia*, that the *O.E.D.* "was compiled by men who were signally out of touch with demotic usage."

Others noticed the faintly tendentious *Marxisant* basis of the book suggested by the choice of words to be treated (*alienation, bourgeois*, etc.), and by the sturdy concentration on concepts like the "supply of labour." Roger Scruton (*Times Literary Supplement*, 26 March), in a powerful piece, detected a certain confusion arising from Williams's failure to distinguish the history of the word *family* from the concept "family"; and noticed further that Professor Williams preferred "to ignore altogether some of the important theoretical meanings that hide behind common words" (*e.g.*, *tradition*) because it suited "his dogmatism to pass over [the] intellectual content [of the word *tradition*] in silence."

This last review apart, what, I began to wonder, had happened to the intellectual life of this country when eminent writers and scholars like the Master of Balliol could write as if they were hardly aware of the existence of the work from which *Keywords* is largely derived, namely the *O.E.D*? Is it possible that even now the *O.E.D.*, despite its relative antiquity and its international stature, is still a relatively unknown and unjustifiably neglected work?

Raymond Williams himself makes an observation about the *O.E.D.* that suggests the emergence of a new myth:

> All I am saying is that the air of massive impersonality which the Oxford *Dictionary* communicates is not so impersonal, so purely scholarly, or so free of active social and political values as might be supposed from its occasional use. Indeed, to work closely in it is at times to get a fascinating insight into what can be called the ideology of its editors, and I think this has simply to be accepted and allowed for, without the kind of evasion which one popular notion of scholarship prepares the way for.

I shall return to this statement later.

When I embarked on the preparation of a revised *Supplement to the O.E.D.* in 1957 it was clear that I would need to read, or re-read, a number of books that had been written about the Dictionary or about its treatment of special areas of vocabulary. In a vague way I realised that the social changes brought about by various upheavals in the present century would need to be reflected in the Supplement. I made a start and read many works, both lexicological and sociological (including Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, which happened to be published in the same year), but others, including William Empson's *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951) and Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958), had to be put aside because of pressure of work. At intervals I felt twinges of regret that I

[1] *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. By RAYMOND WILLIAMS. Fontana/Croom Helm, £5.50, paper 95p.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had proceeded thus far without reading these two books, and that my main policy for the Supplement had been worked out without the benefit of the views expressed in them. My Cambridge friends, especially the more literary ones, made casual references to them with the implication that the Supplement was in some fathomable way likely to suffer if the doctrines expressed by Messrs Empson and Williams were overlooked. When *Keywords* appeared, I therefore turned to these works of the 1950s with the expectancy of someone who seems to have suddenly stumbled on a long-neglected hoard of treasure. This is not the place to record my reaction to William Empson's book: I must leave that for another occasion.

RAYMOND WILLIAMS'S LIFE and my own, it seemed, had proceeded on similar lines. He was born in 1921 of a working-class family in the Welsh border village of Pandy, and was educated at Abergavenny Grammar School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He saw war service for 4½ years in an artillery unit. I was born in 1923 of working-class parents in the small New Zealand town of Wanganui, and was educated at Wanganui Technical College and Victoria University College, Wellington, before coming to Magdalen College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar in 1949. I served in a New Zealand artillery survey unit in New Zealand and Italy for 4½ years. On arrival in Oxford, I tried, naturally with no success at all, to convert my College scout to a New Zealand-type Labourism, and, just as unsuccessfully, I asked him to stop calling me "Sir." Presumably Raymond Williams and I were on level terms at that stage, both well versed in the *mores* of the working class that had been so brilliantly described by Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy*; but we were both on the move. He then branched out into adult education, sociology, and drama, and I into etymology and historical lexicography.

Evidently Raymond Williams completed his undergraduate days in Cambridge without being aware of the existence of the *O.E.D.* (some Establishment conspiracy to keep the truly great works from the *nouveaux étudiants*?), while I consulted it daily in Oxford under the vigilant scrutiny of Jack Bennett, C. S. Lewis, and, above all, of Dr Onions. For Williams the moment of revelation came some years later in the Public Library at Seaford, when, almost casually, he looked up *culture* in the *O.E.D.*, and it confirmed what he had apparently stumbled on unaided, namely that certain words developed important new senses in the early 19th century. These words were *class* and *art*, *industry* and *democracy*, and above all *culture*. "It was like a shock of recognition", he declares. In due course he finished his book *Culture and Society*, but his publishers put a spoke in his wheel by requesting the omission of an Appendix of "notes and short essays" on 60 words which Williams thought were being used "in interesting or difficult ways." And so the Appendix was put aside, and over nearly 20 years he went on collecting more examples and keeping the file up to date. Finally he rewrote all the notes and short essays, added some more, and *Keywords* is the result.

Williams's slight solemnity about the long interval tempts me to digress for a moment to say something about gestation periods. If an elephant has a gestation period of 20 months and a green-fly produces its young at intervals of four hours, we are in no way surprised. But if a green-fly needed 20 months to produce its young that would indeed be surprising. It is part of the somewhat unsophisticated presentation of *Keywords* that the author seems to say that it had a gestation period of nearly 20 years. Dr Johnson's whole dictionary was prepared in nine.

IF ONE IS PRESENTED with a work that is so obviously derivative it is reasonable to consider not merely the nature of the relationship (the reductive process is in fact fairly faithful) but whether the reduced version makes an independent contribution of its own. Expectations are raised in the brief Introduction: "I have found the historical evidence [in the *O.E.D.*] invaluable but have drawn different and at times even opposite conclusions from it." I do not know where these opposite conclusions are to be found as none turned up in any of the words I analysed (though I was in fact not quite sure what to look for as the drawing of conclusions was not one of the obligations laid upon the editors of the *O.E.D.*). On the contrary the indebtedness to the *O.E.D.* is always obvious. Only occasionally (*e.g.* in the entries for *class* and *culture*) did I find new evidence that was not taken from the *O.E.D.*, or that was not easily deducible from standard reference works in Politics and Sociology. He sets up a ghost theory about the relationship of the spoken to the written language. Where is it propounded (outside an Adult Education class, perhaps) that "the written language used to be taken as the real source of authority, with the spoken language as in effect derived from it; whereas now it is much more clearly realised that the real situation is usually the other way round"? Repeatedly he attaches importance to the comparative development of words in other European languages, but almost entirely ignores these languages in his text.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

World of Islam Books

ART OF ISLAM: LANGUAGE AND MEANING
By Titus Burckhardt
This magnificent volume explains that Islamic art reflects what is most inward in the Islamic religion and civilization and that a study of it can lead to a profound understanding of the spiritual realities underlying the physical world.
Contents include: The Ka'ba; The Dome of the Rock; The Question of Images; The Persian Miniature; The Common Language of Islamic Art; Arabic Calligraphy; The Alchemy of Light; The Nature and Role of Sacred Art; The Art of the Carpet; Variety in Unity; The Great Mosques of Kairouan and Cordova; Muslim Town Planning; *etc.*
Quarto volume, with over 200 colour plates and 100 half tones and line drawings.
£12.50 (P & P 65p)

ISLAMIC SCIENCE: AN ILLUSTRATED STUDY
By Seyyed Hossein Nasr
This beautiful book is the first illustrated study of the whole of traditional Islamic science ever undertaken. The author shows that Islamic sciences, unlike those of the West, have qualitative as well as quantitative aspects.
Contents include: Islam and the Rise of the Islamic Sciences; Cosmology, Cosmography and Geography; Natural History: Geology, Mineralogy, Botany, Zoology; Astronomy and Astrology; Physics; Medicine and Pharmacology; Alchemy and Other Occult Sciences; Agriculture and Irrigation; Man in the Universe; *etc.*
Quarto volume, with 135 colour plates and over 100 half tones and line drawings.
£12.50 (P & P 65p)

GEOMETRIC CONCEPTS IN ISLAMIC ART
By Issam El-Said and Ayse Parman
This book shows how knowledge of simple geometric principles led Muslim craftsmen to produce intricate and beautiful patterns and provided a measuring system needed in other art forms.
Contents include: Man and Measure; The Organization of Space; Proportion; Geometric Patterns in Islamic Design; Architecture; Islamic Concepts in Architecture; Arabic Calligraphy; *etc.*
Quarto volume, with 150 half tones and drawings. £7.50 (P & P 65p)

ISLAM AND THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY
By Frithjof Schuon
This is the author's third book on Islam and like his two previous works it is rooted in Sufism, showing the unity of all true religions on the plane of metaphysical truth.
Contents include: Truth and Presence; Paradoxes of Spiritual Expression; The Sunnah; Dilemmas within Ash'arite Theology; The Sufi Paradise; The Forbidden Fruit; *etc.*
Demy 8vo. Cloth £6 (P & P 30p), Paper £3.75 (P & P 25p)

Exhibition catalogues (over 100 half tones and 12 colour plates):
Paintings from the Muslim Courts of India
Music and Musical Instruments in the World of Islam
Carpets of Central Persia
The Qur'an
City of San'a'
The Arts of the Hausa
The bedouin
The Qashqa'i of Iran
(£2.50 each except 'The Qur'an' (£2.95) plus P & P 25p)

Available from your bookseller or direct from the publishers (cash with order please):
The World of Islam Festival Company Ltd.,
Dept. C,
85 Cromwell Road,
London SW7 5BW

World of Islam Calendar of Events also available (P & P 10p)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Under *capitalism*, for example, he says that the word "began to appear in English from the early nineteenth century, and almost simultaneously in French and German", but does not go further than this, or provide any specific evidence. In practice the only European languages he refers to are French and German and never in the originals.

There is further evidence of imprecision in the way in which he handles linguistic matters. The abbreviations of language names are unusual (oE. and mE. for "Old English" and "Middle English", rw for "ultimate traceable word, from which 'root' meanings are derived"), and the few forms he cites from early languages do not always inspire confidence (e.g. *wyrcán* with a strange accent, p. 281). He quotes Marx and Engels in English with no indication of the translation used and without chapter and page references. (A better way to quote these writers is exemplified in Volume I of *A Supplement to the O.E.D.* s.v. *anti-capitalistic*, quot. 1887, and *bourgeois*, sense 2 a, quot. 1886.) The bibliography includes an outmoded edition of Webster's International Dictionary (does the author *really* believe that it is a better edition than that of 1961?), and an incorrect date of publication for Fowler's *Modern English Usage*.

WILLIAMS'S CHOICE OF WORDS presents many oddities. An examination of perhaps 500 words might have sufficed for his main purpose, but he chose to make do with 110. Moreover essays of not less than ten pages might have enabled him to say something of permanent value to sociologists. Such *précis*-type articles as that for *family* serve no particular sociological purpose that I can discern. It is surprising to find *liberal* and *radical* treated but not *conservative*, and *violence* but not *non-violence* (here, as elsewhere, the author seems to have ignored the vocabulary of the political movements of the Third World and of black minorities). He naturally makes repeated use of the word *system* but does not include the word in its own right. Quite extraordinarily there is no entry for *freedom*. His idea of culture and society is also very humanistic: by omitting *god*, *religion*, and *belief* he turns his back on one whole area of human activity. He finds room for *hegemony* (again the Marxist tinge), but no account is taken of the words *war* and *peace*. He makes play in the Introduction with the expression "they just don't speak the same language" but he has no entry for the word *language*. Some economics words are treated but not *mercantilism* and *oligopoly*. It is hardly worth setting down further omissions: the menu is about as varied as that of a village pub on a Sunday evening.

IT IS NOT EASY TO ANALYSE the constituent elements of a large dictionary like the *O.E.D.* nor to be sure that one has established its ideological or other basis even after prolonged and frequent use. I went into questions of this nature a few years ago in a paper for the Philological Society entitled "The Treatment of Controversial Vocabulary in the *Oxford English Dictionary*."[2] One of the main conclusions of this paper was that the choice of items to be treated, especially those at the boundaries of the core of common words, is governed by the editability of such items and by the existence of matching entries if any. I used the word *Ibicencan*, "a native or inhabitant of Ibiza", as an instance of this problem of matchability, and resolved it by discovering that matching entries existed for other words of the type "a native or inhabitant of a small Mediterranean island" (*e.g. Corfiote, Cretan, Cypriot(e), Gibraltarian, Gozitan* (Maltese island of Gozo), *etc., etc.*); but that this evidence in itself was valueless for the problem of whether words of the type "a native or inhabitant of a small island in the Indian (or Pacific, *etc.*) Ocean" qualified for inclusion. For any such words further analyses would be needed. In the same paper I considered the treatment of racial and religious terms in the *O.E.D.* and said that certain conclusions seemed inescapable:

(*a*) The entries in the *O.E.D.* for such words are valuable as a record of their currency and application down to the end of the 19th century but are in many respects antiquated and misleading now because of changes in social, religious, and ethnic attitudes and opinions.

(*b*) New terms of this kind should be admitted to the Dictionary, however opprobrious they may seem to those to whom they are applied, or however controversial the set of beliefs professed by the members of minority sects, and should receive parity of treatment with non-religious and non-ethnic terms.

(*c*) To avoid misunderstanding and hostility it is desirable that the historical record of words like *Jesuit, Jew, Mormon, Negro, nigger*, and others already entered in the *O.E.D.*, should be brought up to date in the later volumes of the *Supplement to the O.E.D.* (it was already too late to act in Volume I).

The Victorian ideology of the editors of the *O.E.D.* took various forms, among which may be mentioned a drawing-room attitude towards sexual vocabulary, and an assumption that many

[2] *Transactions of the Philological Society 1973*, pp. 1–28.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

overseas indigenous peoples were "savages." Thus we find the word *waugh* defined as "an exclamation indicating grief, indignation or the like. Now chiefly as attributed to N. American Indians *and other savages*" (my italics). Naturally the editors could not have foreseen the great social liberating forces of the present century, nor its tyrannies.

THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES of *A Supplement to the O.E.D.* (A–G, H–N) reflect the new ideologies of the 20th century. The sexual revolution is brought out in the wide range of sexual terms (many of which happened to fall in the range A–G) included in our first volume. Volume II (which of course Professor Williams could not have seen) contains numerous entries in which 19th-century racial and religious attitudes are ambitiously updated. Volumes III (O–S) and IV (S–Z) will continue in the same vein, and, thanks to Raymond Williams's timely reminder, will also contain re-treatments of many terms in the "culture and society" area. For example, in the range P–R, I propose to include, in addition to the new senses, fully updated entries for social, cultural, and political words like (from Raymond Williams's list in *Keywords*) *peasant, personality, popular, positivist, pragmatic, private, progressive, radical, reactionary, realism, representative, revolution,* and *romantic*; and (not in Williams's list) *party, pluralism, proletariat, propaganda* (the new entry for this word is being drafted in the present week!), *purge, putsch, racism, rapprochement, red, revisionism,* and *right.*

I have already indicated my belief that I am as familiar as Professor Williams is with the cultural standards and preferences of working-class people. The same could be claimed for Sir James Murray, the first editor of the *O.E.D.* The son of a Scottish tailor, he left school at 14 to become a chemist's assistant before becoming a teacher in an elementary school at Hawick. His higher education was gained through such magazines as *Cassell's Popular Educator*, and he never attended a university. Throughout his life he held to radical and dissenting views. I believe that I am myself capable of detecting a reactionary or Marxist or other bias in any work of reasonable length. I also believe that the political, social, and cultural infrastructure of the *Supplement to the O.E.D.* is substantially nearer to the "massive impersonality" sought for by Professor Williams than that of any of the great dictionaries of the other European nations (including the U.S.S.R.) and North America. And I believe that he may be misjudging the *O.E.D.* itself because he has not studied it, and the other great European dictionaries, sufficiently.

It might be argued that my New Zealand background and certain other personal characteristics, *e.g.* non-conformism in religion, a passion for rugby football, domestic gardening, and formerly for camping, a preference for the Army (of the three branches of the armed services), a penchant for philology and for Anglo-Saxon, and so on, are bound to be reflected in the Dictionary and therefore constitute a retreat from impersonality. I must leave it to others to judge. All I can say is that I have tried to ensure that these areas, and others that involve my personal likes and dislikes, are treated in due proportion. I have also tried to ensure that proper attention has been given to matters of which I have no professional knowledge at all, *e.g.* physics and other major sciences, mathematical logic, natural history, curling, economics, skiing, and so on.

A DICTIONARY IS COMPILED by many hands. While I was pondering on the implications of the sought-for impartiality of the *O.E.D.*, I thought it might be of some interest if I ascertained in some systematic way what was the educational and social background of members of my current staff. They are not the only ones whose views are brought to bear on the Supplement but their involvement is immediate and important. A questionnaire was prepared and the results (from 27 complete replies and 1 partial reply) were as follows:

Nationality:
24 U.K., 3 U.S., 1 N.Z.

Region of Britain:
England: (north) 8, (south) 7, (midlands) 5; Scotland 2; Wales 2.

Languages read fluently:
French 26, Latin 11, (ancient) Greek 7, German 8, Italian 6.

Education:
Doctorates or other advanced degrees (in science, classics, English, etc.) 11;
First degrees 29 (one person has 2) from 15 universities (12 from Oxford) in 10 disciplines (English 10, classics 6, science 5, modern languages 4, etc.)
The majority (15) had a grammar school education.

Newspapers regularly read:
Daily: *Times* 14, *Telegraph* 2, *Daily Mail* 2, *Oxford Mail* 2, *Washington Post* 2, *Guardian* 1.
Weekly: *Times Literary Supplement* 8, *New Yorker* 3, *Listener* 2, *Church Times* 2, *Punch* 2, *Time* 2, *New York Review of Books* 2.

Politics:
Right of centre 11, left of centre 6, centre 10.
Active 2, inactive 25.

Religion:
Anglican 11, agnostic 5, other denominations (including R.C., Presbyterian, Greek Orthodox, Muslim) 12.
Active 12, inactive 15.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bob Woodward & Carl Bernstein

authors of
All The President's Men

THE FINAL DAYS

The definitive and controversial account of the strange and almost surrealistic last months of Richard Nixon's presidency – by the men who began his downfall.

16pp photographs **£4.90**

Robert G. Kaiser

RUSSIA

The People and the Power

"A very good book . . . readable and entertaining as well as instructive . . . vivid, good-humoured, witty and lucid."

Leonard Schapiro,
New Statesman **£5.90**

To be published June 7

Ching Ping & Dennis Bloodworth

THE CHINESE MACHIAVELLI

Three Thousand Years of Chinese Statecraft

£4.90

Secker & Warburg

Years working on the *O.E.D.*:
(0–1) 5, (1–5) 8, (5–10) 8, (10–15) 3, (over 15) 4.
Marital status:
single 15, married 11, divorced 2.
Sex:
11 men, 17 women.
Age: (20–30) 9, (30–40) 5, (40–50) 5, (50–60) 5, (60–70) 3, (70–80) 1.

Anyone may draw whatever conclusions they wish from this identikit picture of the typical *O.E.D.* lexicographer.

MR PHILIP TOYNBEE and Professor Williams seem to be under the impression that the *O.E.D.* (and they do not seem to be excluding the *Supplement*) is out of touch with demotic usage. Unlike (say) modern Greek, English has no clearly defined set of speech characteristics that could be called "demotic." The *O.E.D.* itself defines *demotic* as "of, pertaining or proper to, the common people", and this will need to suffice as an indication of its nature. Where is it to be found in print? Presumably it is set down in newspapers and magazines addressed to the "common people" (*e.g. Daily Mirror, Sun, Morning Star, Weekend, Reveille, Petticoat, etc.*), and also in plays (*e.g.* those of Pinter and Wesker) in which popular speech is presented. Such sources are quoted repeatedly in the *Supplement to the O.E.D.* (even if members of staff do not read the newspapers mentioned some of our outside readers do), and their Victorian and Edwardian analogues in the *O.E.D.* itself. Similar English-language publications from abroad are also quoted with great frequency. We have arranged for batches of English-language newspapers from Third World areas (especially India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) to be sent to us regularly for systematic reading. We subscribed for two years to *Black Panther* (and from it knew all about the self-styled Symbionese Liberation Army long before the Patty Hearst affair brought it to the attention of the world's press) and to *Black World.* We have monitored various sub-cultures by extracting the distinctive vocabulary of publications like *Village Voice* and *Screw*, *Oz* and *IT*, and numerous others. *Private Eye* receives its share of attention, though its language (as distinct from its ideology) is rather too staid (the old Barry Mackenzie column apart) for our purposes. We keep an eye on the outpourings of the Goons and of Monty Python—such vocabulary does not take long to get into print in the *Radio Times*, *Listener*, and elsewhere—and addicts of *Coronation Street*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, and *Kojak* will find the language of these pleasure gardens fully documented in the *Supplement to the O.E.D.* All the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

main items in the U/non-U areas have been, or will be, treated. A list of some of the items from the spectrum of demotic usage might start with the following from among the items treated in the first two volumes of *A Supplement to the O.E.D.*:

coupla (=a couple of)
gotta (=got to)
let's you and me (s.v. *let* v.[1] 14 a)
looey (=lieutenant, N. Amer.)
lotta (=a lot of)
loverly
luv (Lor' luv a duck)
me (=my, e.g. "cost you a night's shooting, me backside").

Richard Hoggart in his *Uses of Literacy* (p.265) says that "among working-class people . . . a decent local, personal and communal way of life remains . . . in speech, in forms of culture (the Working-Men's Clubs, the styles of singing, the brass bands . . . the close-group games like darts and dominoes)." The vocabulary of all such areas is fully exploited in *A Supplement to the O.E.D.* So too is the terminology of other sectors of working-class interest, for example (as specified by Hoggart, p. 267) the breeding of pet fish, other domestic pets, and cage-birds; bell-ringing, fishing, cycling, and so on.

In the continuing search for demotic usage a member of my dictionary staff[3] and I conducted a small experiment. In this experiment, a systematic reading of five copies of the *Daily Mirror* and one copy each of the *News of the World* and the *Sun* yielded 140 demotic-type items. Of these, 97 happened to fall in the range A–N, *i.e.* areas covered by the *O.E.D.* and supplementary volumes. Of the 97 items, 25 were already covered by the *O.E.D.* and 57 by entries in the Supplement. Of the remaining 15, *aggro* and *clunk-click* were too recent in origin to be included in Volume I (but would have been included had they existed in time). The remainder were nearly all phrases, *e.g.* "you could eat off the floor" (*i.e.* it was so spotless) and "to have more (something) than hot dinners", an area in which the limits of the *O.E.D.* are most strongly marked. The items actually covered by the *O.E.D.* and supplementary volumes included the following:

What are they *in aid of*?
Mr S. boasted about people he had *over a barrel.*
Fat chaps don't attract the *birds.*
Wales should . . . find out who are the real offenders at *putting the boot in.*
Was Jack the Ripper a *right charlie*?
That old Smoothie-*chops* Hadleigh.
I find all that *cobblers* embarrassing.
I still roll *me* own *fags.*

[3] Miss R. J. Sansome. Others who assisted me in various ways with the preparation of this article were Dr R. E. Allen, Mrs L. S. Burnett, and Dr J. B. Sykes.

David Reed
ANNA

One of the most poignant love stories of our time, *Anna* is also the harrowing record of a beautiful young woman's mental breakdown and eventual suicide.
Written by her husband, this disturbing book calls into question all our basic ideas about the values of family life, about mental illness, and, above all, about love and death.

£3.50

John Culshaw

author of
Ring Resounding

REFLECTIONS ON WAGNER'S RING

"Extraordinary . . . it communicates so much more than the sum of its words; in some magical way Culshaw suggests the living essences that nourish the *Ring* and keep it eternally fresh."
Leonard Bernstein

Illustrated **£3.50**

John Hatch
TWO AFRICAN STATESMEN

Kaunda of Zambia and Nyerere of Tanzania

The dual biography and intimate, personal story of two remarkable Africans whose influence stretches far beyond the boundaries of their respective states.

£6.00

Secker & Warburg

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Every time I asked him what he'd done he would
fly off the handle.
We're always too tired for any *hanky-panky.*
What they should not be doing at that tender age
is *having it off* in the long grass.
Why long johns are *just the job.*
Want t' *make somethin' of it*?
Without wishin' to *cast nasturtiums.*
How to *nick* a car.

FEBRUARY AND MARCH were indeed instructive months. Some distinguished writers treated Professor Williams's amiable and generally competent little book as if it were a primary work of scholarship. But (librarians please note), as one might expect from the Introduction and from the author's own predilections, it belongs rather in the section classified in the Dewey system as Education 374 (Adult Education) and it should have been issued with that made plain. At that level of performance I have no special complaints and find much to commend and be grateful for, not least the author's fairly consistently stated admiration for the *O.E.D.* itself.

"I have never been so happy in my life"

On Sylvia Plath—By ANTHONY THWAITE

THE TIME TO MAKE SENSE of Sylvia Plath will be when Faber & Faber eventually get round to publishing a properly edited Collected Poems—something long promised but long delayed. Meanwhile, no doubt, the poems will go on being released in small groups like South African diamonds, and the biographical/exegetical industry will forge ahead. We already have the wildly uneven *The Art of Sylvia Plath*[1] (the egregious Richard Howard, for example, and his "lithic impulse", "aporia", "nodal peace", etc.), Eileen Aird's workmanlike but pedestrian monograph in the Oliver & Boyd Modern Writers series,[2] Nancy Hunter Steiner's chattering *A Closer Look at Ariel* (redeemed a little by George Stade's Afterword),[3] Barry Kyle's "dramatic portrait" ("conceived and adapted" by him from things written by and about her, and first presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at The Place in October 1973),[4] and a thick pile of reviews, essays and theses, the best-known probably being A. Alvarez's chapter in *The Savage God.*[5] At least one Plath ex-boyfriend is trotting his memoirs round the publishers, and I have a glum feeling that a black musical called *Who is Sylvia?* is only just round the corner.

These irritable thoughts have been prompted by the appearance of *Letters Home,*[6] a 500-page selection by the poet's mother of the letters her daughter wrote to her and to a few other members of the family and friends between 1950 and Sylvia Plath's death early in 1963. The whole book is an enormous monument to the filial bond: as such, it is inevitably moving. There is no point in trying to bear down on it with literary/critical criteria, because it represents the artless, unconsidered stuff millions of people write to fond parents: news, aspirations, successes, disappointments, impulsive affection. One feels a trespasser, reading these letters. Yet Mrs Plath, and Faber & Faber, must have felt that there was some justification in publishing this huge and lavishly illustrated book. What was it? Is it contained in the closing sentences of the blurb?

> We see here a relationship of great intimacy between mother and daughter—there is much to be read between the lines. To readers who may have taken her work as straight biography [autobiography?], this book will bring Plath into perspective as a person and as a writer.

So—reading between the lines—Mrs Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* is emphatically *not* Mrs Plath; and in any case that novel, according to its author (letter dated 25 October 1962), was "a potboiler and just practice." The infatuated death-worshipper, the doomed goddess of pain, the emotional extremist to whom poetry was "a murderous art" (Alvarez), is nowhere present in these letters. Six weeks before she killed herself, she wrote to her mother "I have never been so happy in my life."

Of course these letters can be seen as part of a thoughtful strategy; someone as affectionate and considerate as Sylvia Plath clearly was wouldn't

---

[1] Charles Newman (ed.), *The Art of Sylvia Plath* (Faber & Faber, 1970).
[2] Eileen Aird, *Sylvia Plath* (Oliver & Boyd, 1973).
[3] Nancy Hunter Steiner, *A Closer Look at Ariel* (Faber & Faber, 1974).
[4] *Sylvia Plath: A Dramatic Portrait.* By BARRY KYLE. Faber & Faber, £1.10.
[5] A. Alvarez, *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971).
[6] *Letters Home.* By SYLVIA PLATH. Selected and edited with a commentary by AURELIA SCHOBER PLATH. Faber & Faber, £6.75.

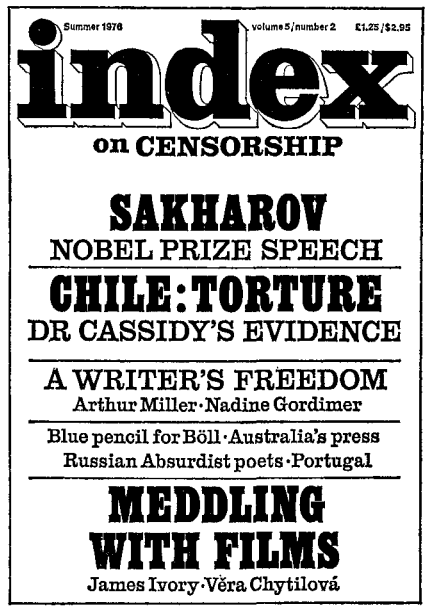
PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bombard a distant, concerned and widowed parent with hysterical miseries. Even at the worst time, on her own with two tiny children, cooped up in a flat during the cruellest London winter for over a hundred years, her complaints—about flu, money, au pair girls—are mildly put. Her fulsomeness, her ecstasies, are reserved for triumphs and pleasures: a poem or a book accepted, a prize or a party, kindnesses received and given. There seems no calculation in any of it; rather, the immediate and spontaneous reactions of a generous, exuberant, vital girl and woman. She was ambitious, of course, for recognition, even fame, and quite worldly in her response to these: she knew which magazines "counted", which editors and other literary folk carried approval that was worth having—but at least as much on behalf of her husband, Ted Hughes, as for her own work. She was professional without being armour-plated.

So what new perspectives do these letters give to her work? Not only the voyeur and the gossip but the ordinarily sympathetic reader may sense here and there that the whole truth has not been permitted to emerge: dot-dot-dots come at crucial points, where one suspects an editorial decision has been made that certain names shall not be named, certain facts shall not be dragged out into the open. This is understandable—living people could be wounded—but such delicacy perhaps means that it is far too early, 13 years after her death, to present this kind of autobiography-through-letters, or indeed a proper biography at all. If the letters push one back to the poems, they do so through hints and omissions as much as through "background" material. Is this ill-matched visiting couple the subject-matter of the poem "Lesbos"? Where is there any mention of the car accident that presumably lay behind "Stopped Dead"? And so on.

One positive thing the letters do is to give the lie, with circumstantial absoluteness, to those who have seen Sylvia Plath as a pioneer, or founder-member, of women's liberation. She was devotedly domestic, fulfilled by home. Until the separation (which she seems to have acknowledged with brave practicality and without recrimination), she was wholly and unequivocally attached to her husband and to his work. Even afterwards, four months before her death: "The one thing I retain is love for and admiration of [Ted's] writing. I know he is a genius, and for a genius there are no bonds and no bounds." As Mrs Plath remarks in an earlier footnote:

> From the time Sylvia was a very little girl, she catered to the male of any age so as to bolster his sense of superiority. . . . She did not pretend the male was superior; she sought out those who were. . . .



Andrei Sakharov

'I am defending the thesis that civil and political rights are of cardinal and decisive importance in shaping the destiny of mankind. This standpoint differs substantially from widespread Marxist and also from technocratic theories, according to which it is the material factors, the social and economic rights which are of crucial significance. . . .

Dr Sheila Cassidy

'I told them I was a British citizen . . . and they replied, "Our image abroad is so bad that it doesn't matter".'

Arthur Miller

'The solution is not to set up in the State Dept. a new division which will read moral lectures to dictatorships. I would suggest instead that the Senate and Congress begin by informing the Administration that the hard-won wealth, the resources and the talents of the American people are not to be travestied in the support of anti-democratic dictatorships—no matter how anti-Communist they advertise themselves to be.'

Vera Chytilová

'I have made five films in all. Since I finished the last in 1970 I have not been allowed to work on any of my screenplays. . . . When my Soviet friends, Gerasimov and Makarova, wanted to meet me, they were told I was working in Slovakia. Yugoslav filmmakers who were interested in working with me were informed that I was too busy filming at home.

The same reason was given when they turned down an invitation for me to take part in the 1st World Festival of Women Directors in New York, which opened with my film, *Something Completely Different*. The State Film likewise refused invitations for me from France, Italy, Venezuela. . . .'

96 pages £1·25, US $2·95; from 21 Russell Street, Covent Garden, London WC2B 5HP.
SUBSCRIPTIONS £5 pa (4 issues), or US $14 (air-speeded to USA) from **Oxford University Press** (Journals), Press Road, London NW10 0DD.
USA & CANADA: Bookstore distribution by **Random House Inc, New York.**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After that, how does one read "Daddy"?

> *Every woman adores a Fascist,*
> *The boot in the face, the brute*
> *Brute heart of a brute like you.*

NOTHING IN THESE LETTERS accounts for, or corroborates in any significant way, the pressure of death that makes itself felt as early as some of the poems in *The Colossus*. The suicide attempt in 1953 is put in its context, both editorially by Mrs Plath and in two Sylvia Plath letters, the first dated 28th December 1953 ("I kept it as a record of how I felt about things at the time, looking back at last summer"), the second written in 1956 and sent to her mother as material for giving sympathetic advice to a family friend whose son was having mental trouble. What one senses in the poems—and one mustn't exaggerate, for there are many poems that have nothing of "Death and the Maiden" about them—is something privately, even secretively, faced and tamed into art. The sprightliness, the frenetic brightness, of "Lady Lazarus" and its companions is a conscious weapon, and a stabilising one. That in a moment of desolation she miscalculated and pushed herself over the edge is in a sense irrelevant. As Peter Porter expressed it, sensibly and succinctly, in a review of *The Art of Sylvia Plath*:[7]

> . . . her analysis of the human condition is as relevant and healthy as that of any poet who did not commit suicide. The *Ariel* poems will always seem remarkable, but not as the last achievements of a desperate woman. That she is dead and we are alive is not important—this only anticipates the usual state of poet and audience by a few years.

In a persuasive essay published some years ago, Barbara Hardy argued that Sylvia Plath's is "a poetry of enlargement, not derangement"; she talked about the "breadth and rationality" of her art.[8] When, in June 1961, Sylvia Plath recorded a number of poems for me at the BBC, she prefaced her reading of "Parliament Hill Fields" with the following remarks, which I think have never been published:

> I imagine the landscape of Parliament Hill Fields in London seen by a person overwhelmed by an emotion so powerful as to colour and distort the scenery. The speaker here is caught between the old and the new year, between the grief caused by the loss of a child and the joy aroused by the knowledge of an older child safe at home. Gradually the first images of blankness and absence give way to images of convalescence and healing as the woman turns, a bit stiffly, and with difficulty, from her sense of bereavement to the vital and demanding part of her world which still survives.

So much for the "miniature mad talent" as characterised by one critic—exasperated, no doubt, and I know how he felt, by the afflatus of sub-Laingian nonsense that has flowed from the presses ever since February 1963. "The vital and demanding part of her world which still survives" is what so many of the cultists fail to see. (I once spent most of a painful afternoon trying to persuade a girl of 20 or so, who had fallen under an obsessive Plath spell and who was writing consummate pieces of Plath pastiche, that it was not a necessary part of the pattern for her to kill herself.) To say this is not to make light of the "blankness and absence" but to see them balanced against "convalescence and healing."

These are not soft or consolatory words, but a plea to recognise the manoeuvres and masks which Sylvia Plath adopted, as a writer, so as to cope with the world. To quote Empson, they "learn a style from a despair." Or, to quote again from Plath's own 1961 broadcast:

> A poem can't take the place of a plum or an apple. But just as a painting can recreate, by illusion, the dimension it loses by being confined to canvas, so a poem, by its own system of illusions, can set up a rich and apparently living world within its particular limits. Most of the poems I am going to introduce in the next minutes attempt to recreate, in their own way, definite situations and landscapes. They are, quite emphatically, about the "things of this world." When I say "this world", I include, of course, such feelings as fear and despair and barrenness, as well as domestic love and delight in nature. These darker emotions may well put on the masks of quite unworldly things—such as ghosts, or trolls, or antique gods.

And, as a preface to her poem "The Stones" (the final section of "Poem for a Birthday", from *The Colossus*):

> . . . the speaker has utterly lost her sense of identity and relationship to the world. She imagines herself, quite graphically, undergoing the process of rebirth, like a statue that has been scattered and

[7] *New Statesman*, 9 January 1970.
[8] "The Poetry of Sylvia Plath", in Martin Dodsworth (ed.), *The Survival of Poetry* (Faber, 1970).

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Leading academics

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
Experienced honours graduates

TRANSLATORS
Qualified, most European languages

ARCHIVISTS
Try our range of services, sources and subjects

Research Assistance Routledge Associates
25 Woodhayes Road, London SW19
Phone 01-947 5614

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ground down, only to be resurrected and pieced together centuries later. Her nightmare vision of waking in a modern hospital gradually softens, as she recovers, and accepts the frightening, yet necessary, ties of love which will heal and return her, whole again, to the world.

That poem ends with the words "I shall be good as new"—and there's a wryness, a comical resilience, in that line (only second-hand or once-damaged things are thought of as "good as new") which is entirely characteristic of Sylvia Plath. Hers was not a poetry of the grim apocalyptic, of ferocious Manichean dualism, of the vatic and the eschatological. When those Collected Poems in the end appear—and a lavish crate of family letters is no substitute at all for them—I am sure my feeling will be confirmed: that the desire to be "whole again" is their continuing emotional thread, and that until her death that desire was fiercely, cunningly, skilfully and convincingly fulfilled.

Born to Lose

Japanese Heroes—By GEOFFREY BOWNAS

THIS STUDY OF Japanese heroism was part-inspired by a suggestion from Yukio Mishima that Ivan Morris' deep admiration for the languid beauty of Japan's Court culture might have obscured the harsher and more tragic aspects of Japan. In the outcome, although this book deals with savage episodes of war and some of the heroes are robust and swashbuckling, despatching themselves out of this life by the ugly practice of ritual disembowelment, yet the naive sincerity of the unsuccessful hero, the poignancy of his final cataclysmic failure after an earlier string of victories against the odds and the hero's inevitable capacity to recall the traditions of a millennium in a farewell verse—all make it seem that *The Nobility of Failure*[1] is somehow an addendum to the study of the gentle melancholy and the elegant urbanity of the Heian period to which Ivan Morris has given so much of his recent attention (*The World of the Shining Prince, The Pillow Book,* and *As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams*).

Japanese heroes tend to die young—Mishima, who did finally die the prototype heroic death, was appalled that he was still alive at the old age of 45. There is an established heroic parabola; wholehearted and sincere effort in a hopeless cause, which brings initial achievement and success, followed inevitably by glorious failure and a brave, poignant death. Strangely for a society otherwise so success-oriented, Japanese heroes are almost always failures. Our western heroes are mainly winners; yet, in spite of the lack of any strong tradition of empathy with failures, it is easy for us to warm to most of the heroes in this book.

The stories of the nine individuals (who span the 4th and the 19th centuries) all conform to the standard heroic pattern, and the *kamikaze* pilots, who are the subjects of the final chapter, fit the mould perfectly. Japan's almost absurdly successful run in the first years of the Pacific War had given way to a string of failures, and in the final months of the war the *kamikaze* units fought desperately and with supreme naivety to turn the tide again in Japan's favour. They were not fanatics or crude bullies, they were not hardened professional soldiers, but sensitive undergraduates, snatched from their second year studies, serene and quiet (*reisei* is the Japanese word). They saw themselves as the Emperor's shield, their mission to remove the stain of the impurities which were damaging Japan. His cause, hopeless though it might be, was true—so his sincerity told him as the lone *kamikaze* pilot hurled himself against overwhelming enemy forces. The *kamikaze* approach, which became central to the Japanese effort in the last six months of the war, proved to be an utter failure—in the Battle of Bonomisaki, for example, in April 1945, the Japanese lost what was left of the Imperial Navy, against an American casualty list of 12 men.

TIME AND AGAIN, the *kamikaze* pilots or Mishima, the two major 20th-century manifestations of Japan's noble failures, give an allusion to or create a replica of significant elements in the stories of earlier heroes. The exploits of these heroes were an integral part of some of the most critical turning-points in Japanese history. Yamato Takeru, the first of Professor Morris' tragic heroes, was a prominent figure in the troubled years of the 4th century when the ruling Yamato clan was consolidating its authority over the whole of Japan. At first brilliantly successful

[1] *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan.* By IVAN MORRIS. Secker & Warburg, £6.50.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a long campaign against the "Eastern barbarians", he soon fell foul of the supernatural and died of a mysterious disease after confronting a succession of malignant local deities.

Another hero is Yorozu, the "Emperor's Shield", who was involved in a watershed in Japanese history at the end of the 6th century: the struggle for supremacy between leading clan chieftains had narrowed to the final fight-out between the innovators (who would bring many alien elements from the Asiatic mainland) and the clan that stood for the preservation of indigenous traditions. Yorozu fought on the side of tradition and lost.

Michizane, in the 9th century, is an example of the failed scholar hero. He was a highly respected literary man, holding high office at the Heian Court, the hub of the Shining Prince's world. But he became entangled in court intrigue in the support of an attempt by the Emperor to wrest back authority from the Fujiwara house. The Fujiwaras dominated all aspects of court life, aesthetic as well as political, and the attempt to oust them was premature and doomed. Michizane's fall was typically swift, from the height of cultural authority and political influence in the capital of the Heian courtier plummeting to the degradation of exile in Kyushu, far beyond the confines of civilisation.

Yoshitsune is perhaps the perfect example of heroic failure in Japan, partly because his story, as we know it today, is nearer to legend than to history; as a result, Yoshitsune incorporates more of the characteristics of the Japanese hero than could the purely historical figure. This most popular of all Japanese heroes was at the heart of events in the seminal period when Japan was moving from a court-dominated form of government to a feudal polity under a military shogunate of the Minamoto house. The first Shogun was Yoritomo, Yoshitsune's elder brother. The heroic younger brother's story is quickly told—the descent from panache and *samurai* swagger at the height of success, as he inflicted a series of defeats on the rival Taira clan, to the spirit of the weakling and ineffectual Heian courtier as he is hounded by a jealous and vindictive elder brother, and to his final suicide by *harakiri*, the form of self-inflicted ending chosen by so many of Japan's heroes. In an attempt to explain why the Japanese chose this part of the body as the site for self-destruction, Mishima links disembowelment with sincerity: the Japanese of feudal times believed that sincerity resided in the entrails, so that "if we needed to show our sincerity, we needed to cut our bellies and take out our visible sincerity." Mishima's own recapitulation of the act was the culmination of

Who's Who in Twentieth Century Literature

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH

Author of the highly acclaimed *Guide to Modern World Literature*

A highly readable and lively guide to modern writers throughout the world. There are 700 entries giving the salient points of an author's life and a critical appraisal of his work. Together they form an account of modern literature that is not only immensely informative, but highly stimulating and enjoyable.

£6.50

Weidenfeld Nicolson

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much theorising of this kind, and was his own exemplification of utter sincerity.

KUSUNOKI MASASHIGE killed himself after losing a critical battle in the early 14th century. His defeat marked the failure of a movement for Imperial Restoration and opened the way for another five centuries of shogunal rule. At a critical point in the story, Masashige's brother spoke of his wish to be reborn seven times, so that he could dedicate his seven lives to destroying the enemies of the throne. This wish has found an echo in more recent manifestations of Japanese heroism.

Amakusa Shirō, the 16-year-old insurgent leader of the Shimabara Rebellion, was another hero at a crucial watershed in Japanese history. The Shimabara Rebellion, the dying convulsion of 17th-century Christianity in Japan, marked the end of the influence of the West and the start of a closed Japan. Amakusa's revolt was a total failure, for the evils it sought to end were all intensified. His fellow rebels were all killed, religious persecution became even more savage, and the victorious Tokugawa shogunate was confirmed in its resolve to isolate Japan.

Japan was thus withdrawn from the world until the 1860s, when the last of Ivan Morris' heroes, Saigō Takamori, and the group of loyalists of whom he was a leader forced the downfall of the usurping shogunate and secured the restoration of Emperor Meiji. Japan was opened again to the West and the Meiji leaders embarked on a programme of express modernisation. But Saigō could not stay one with them. The parabolic curve of his career is indeed steep, for within five years he swung from office as the new Emperor's first Chief Counsellor of State and Commander of the Imperial Bodyguard, to a role as leader of a sanguinary revolt against the imperial government he had helped restore, hounded by the imperial forces he had once commanded.

Saigō, it was always said, was the last true hero in the Japanese tradition, in that the changes that he helped set in motion and that moulded modern Japan would not harbour the revival of heroic failure in the old mould. Yet the psychological fundamentals are identical in Saigō and in the *kamikaze* pilots of the Second World War; these pilots, as they followed the path of Japan's heroic tradition, regarded Saigō as a spiritual ancestor. In his discussion of the tragic heroes of 20th-century Japan, Professor Morris interlocks events and personalities in a masterly way, showing how the *kamikaze* pilots and Mishima drew from the model of earlier models of failure and how elements of the heroic tradition dovetail across the centuries.

ALTHOUGH NOT THE SUBJECT of his own chapter, Mishima yet looms large as the most recent example of the classical Japanese tragic hero. Mishima's suicide, a very studied and absolutely correct copy of earlier models, belongs firmly to the pattern of Japanese heroism. He disembowelled himself after what might have been for him the slow agony of survival after 1945, when he had hoped to die an early and heroic death in the defence of Japanese values. After a quarter of a century of chafing at the tedium of peace, there was hope for a noble end in the course of the "revolution" (this very word was being used) that might well develop from disturbances over the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in the summer of 1970. With his Shield Society (a group of do-or-die young rightist extremists) Mishima was ready to defend his Emperor from the revolution and die gloriously in the act. But the revolution never came and the crestfallen Mishima was left to foment his own—his final act before he killed himself was to call on Japan's Self-Defence Forces to renew themselves spiritually in the service of a divine Emperor. The call fell on unsympathetic ears and, an abject failure, Mishima disembowelled himself and was despatched by a second. On their death mission, Mishima and his men wore head-bands inscribed with the words, "To serve the Emperor for seven

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

WARNING TO THE WESTERN WORLD

The full texts of both the 'Panorama' interview and the BBC Radio Talk 95p

BODLEY HEAD/BBC

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lives"—a reminiscence of Kusunoki's brother's wish to be reborn seven times to destroy the enemies of the throne.

In fact, Kusunoki's heroic status, far from losing its authority in the century since Japan modernised, has been reconfirmed at every critical point in that century—at the start, for instance, when Imperial Restoration was in the air, and in the years of nationalism in the 1930s and the Pacific War when he was portrayed in the text books as the worthiest *samurai* in Japanese history. One *kamikaze* unit was named The Seven Lives Squad after his example and one pilot from this unit used the stock image of the cherry blossom to express the evanescence of the warrior hero's life—

> *If only we might fall*
> *Like cherry blossoms in the spring—*
> *So pure and radiant!*

Mishima's prowess in the traditional martial arts, as with the best of Japanese heroes, was tempered by his outstanding ability in the literary and polite arts. There is no doubt of his physical and moral courage, no question of his single-minded sincerity. His impracticality and political naivety, like Yoshitsune's, derive naturally from this sincerity.

As we have now come to expect of him, Ivan Morris offers a wealth of hitherto little-known detail in this eminently readable study. There is a clear sympathy with the tragic figures he introduces to us. But for his insights into the harsher and more brutal aspects of the Japanese character and Japanese history (which Mishima urged him to contemplate and which would indeed be of great value) it seems that we must wait until Professor Morris writes about the reverse of the hero, the Japanese success who is so often cast as the super-villain who survives and overcomes by cold and calculated self-interest the hero's naive and ready sincerity.

The Quest for the Historical Moses

By Hyam Maccoby

EVERY GENERATION makes its own picture of Moses. This is brought out by the various Moses-images in David Daiches' lavishly illustrated book.[1] Perhaps the most unexpected is the beardless Grecian youth portrayed at San Vitale, Ravenna, receiving a small white scroll from a heavenly hand. Almost as unexpected, in a different way, is the elegant 18th-century *savant* (portrayed by Champaigne), with beard and hair meticulously waved and curled. My own favourite in the book is the picture of Moses standing with his Elders, all in medieval German hats, in the midst of a shower of delightfully-drawn quails, descending vertically like dive-bombers. But there is also the romantic Moses of Gustave Doré, set in brooding opium-dream vistas; Botticelli's Moses, a Renaissance courtier, chivalrously pouring water for Jethro's Arcadian-shepherdess daughters; Marc Chagall's Moses, a Hasidic miracle-rabbi; Ben Shahn's Moses, a Talmudical spoil-sport, glowering in his prayer-shawl at an innocently gambolling Golden Calf. And, of course, there is the supreme Moses of Christian culture, Michelangelo's horned Moses,[2] with its Zeus-like presence betraying the Christian identification of Moses with God the Father—an identification brought out beautifully, if unconsciously, in the "Burning Bush" of Eustechio, where the white-bearded Jehovah leaning out from the Burning Bush is

[1] *Moses: Man in the Wilderness.* By DAVID DAICHES. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £6.50.

[2] One should recommend on this point Ruth Mellinkoff's work *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (1970). In place of the old notion that Michelangelo and other Christian artists were misled by St Jerome's "mis-translation" of Exodus 34:29 in giving Moses his horns, Ruth Mellinkoff provides a wide-ranging analysis of the symbolism of horns in the divinisation of gods and heroes in many religious cultures.

Unfortunately, however, her discussion of the Hebrew text of Exodus 34 : 29 is not quite accurate. When Moses descended from the mount, according to modern translations, "the skin of his face shone." St Jerome translated this as "cornuta esset facies sua", *i.e.* "his face was horned." The verb in the Hebrew is *"qaran,"* a *hapax legomenon* which is connected with the noun *qeren*, which ordinarily means "horn", but *may* sometimes mean "ray of light." Actually the evidence for this latter meaning in Biblical Hebrew is very shaky, being based on only one other text, itself disputed, Habbakuk 3 : 4. St Jerome's translation is not a blunder, as is often asserted (*e.g.* by Moshe Pearlman). Later translators, however, have all preferred "shone." Some modern scholars emend the text; and one, A. Jirku, has suggested that Moses wore a horn-mask on cultic occasions.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the mirror-image of the Moses who kneels before him.

In all of this there is an obvious parallel with the case of Jesus, who has also been fashioned by Christians of each generation in their own image. There is a distinction to be made, however; Jesus has been constructed as an ideal image, while Moses has been constantly "placed" by Christians as a fore-runner or fore-shadower, as a limited figure—sometimes even a malign one. Jews, on the other hand, seeing Moses as an ideal, though not in the same way, have produced their own sequence of Moses representations; *e.g.* the Hellenistic Moses of Philo; the Rabbinical Moses; the rationalist Moses of Maimonides. Finally, in the 19th and 20th centuries, there is the parallel search for the "historical Jesus" and the "historical Moses." For the first time a conscious intellectual effort was made to step completely outside the subjective and environmental framework of the enquirer, and to see Jesus and Moses "as they really were", and in their own true historical setting.

Behind this quest lies a new sense of the reality of time; a conviction that experience is unrepeatable, and that each historical period has its own unique character to be understood in its own terms. No more medieval hats for Moses and his Elders, and no 20th-century gear either. It is paradoxical, however, that this respect for the uniqueness of the period is likely to result in a reduction of status and uniqueness in the person. The "historical Moses" or the "historical Jesus" may emerge as a rather ordinary member of his unique milieu; to go on to endow him with extraordinary qualities suggests a suspicious emotional investment on the personal part of the enquirer. And this brings its dangers. If previous centuries have over-estimated the heroes of history, we are liable to under-estimate them. In seeking to dispel subjectivity and to reconstruct events soberly just as they were, we may be importing another kind of subjectivity, that of our own disenchanted presuppositions. If we make Moses or Jesus into pawns in our own intellectual games, we are guilty of a deep subjectivism, despite all the new authenticity of local colour which archaeology and related disciplines can now supply.

Actually, the dangers are even more complex than this, for we are very far from having achieved (if this is the right word) the degree of disenchantment at which we ostensibly aim. Ancient predilections continue to work underneath a façade of scholarly objectivity. The traditional battle between the Old Testament and the New continues to be waged covertly. The Christian attempt to disguise the conflict by

On Value Judgments in the Arts and other essays

Elder Olson

For over 40 years Elder Olson's essays in practical and theoretical criticism have provided provocative answers to questions of central literary importance. Always elegant and often witty, the essays in this collection represent some of the finest work by one of the founders (himself a poet) of the Chicago School of criticism. They range from studies of particular poems, poets and critics, through essays dealing with principles of hermeneutics and problems of interpretation to theoretical statements and questions of metacriticism. **£13.60**

Hawthorne, Melville, and the Novel

Richard H Brodhead

Altogether Hawthorne and Melville produced five brilliant novels between 1850–52: *The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, Moby-Dick, The Blithedale Romance* and *Pierre.* Analysing these novels both as individual achievements and as products of the quest for form that inspired them, Brodhead argues that, despite the differences between these two writers, their major novels embody a distinct mode of formal creation. **£7.85**

Forms of the Modern Novella

Mary Doyle Springer

What is a novella? The author defines it not merely as a narrative caught vaguely between the short story and the long novel, but as a genre all its own, a series of forms which achieve their appropriate beauty and full pleasure for the reader at the novella length. As well as developing this theory of length, the author provides sensitive readings for a number of novellas. **£8.20**

Adventure, Mystery and Romance

Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture

John G Cawelti

Danger, mystery and excitement on page one; action, violence and sex on page two. What more do we expect from our "light" reading —crime stories, mysteries, Westerns or social melodrama? In this book John G Cawelti provides the first general theory for the analysis of popular literary formulas and reveals the artistry that underlies the best in formulaic literature. Writers discussed include Mario Puzo, Dorothy Sayers, Owen Wister, Agatha Christie, George Simenon, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Mickey Spillane, Zane Grey, W S Hart and James Fenimore Cooper. **£7.50**

University of Chicago Press
126 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SD

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Karl Popper
Unended Quest
The 'intellectual autobiography' of Britain's most distinguished contemporary philosopher

D. E. Moggridge
Keynes
... not only succeeds in saying something new but even succeeds in saying the old better than it has ever been said before ...' Professor Mark Blaug

FONTANA PAPERBACKS
14 St James's Place London SW1A 1PF

The BALTIC NATIONS

The Quest for Regional Integration and Political Liberty

by Bronis J. Kaslas, Dr. jur. of the University of Strasbourg, Professor of Political Science and Modern European History.

The first book in English on pioneer movement of regionalism in Baltic area, the crossroad of Slavic and Germanic civilizations ...

£6.00
$12.00

EURAMERICA PRESS
381 N. Main Street
Pittston, Pa. 18640 USA

putting the two Testaments within one cover was never very successful anyway; it was like Jacob and Esau, who kept fighting in the womb. When the so-called Higher Criticism of the 19th century made its attack on the Old Testament, dividing it into strata and reducing it to mythology or to aetiological legend, the New Testament was for a considerable time exempted from the onslaught; and even now, when the New Testament has long received the same savage treatment at the hands of Christian scholars, it is remarkable how the figure of Jesus seems to emerge from each new dismemberment of the text in much the same lineaments as before. Indeed, the new "scientific" methods are used to widen the gap between the two Testaments, so that while Moses disappears more and more into the Early Iron Age, Jesus' claims to timeless supra-historical validity are somehow upheld. Add to this certain superficial notions of Evolution by which what comes later must always be better, and it is not surprising that the concept of Moses as the foreshadower of Jesus is more strongly entrenched than ever, being supported by the average Western humanist even more uncritically, and a good deal more ignorantly, than by the believing Christian.

DAVID DAICHES, in his continuously interesting book, places himself firmly in the line of those who have made the quest for "the historical Moses." He considers carefully the evidence from Egypt, Canaan, and Babylonia which may throw light on the antecedents of the Hebrews, their connections with the Midianites (or the section of them known as the Kenites), the possible date of the Exodus, the probable route taken across the Desert, the location of Mount Sinai, the stages of the Conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews. While regarding the Biblical text as containing many accretions of legend, and as coloured by later developments and by the attitudes of the priestly caste, he argues that there is a solid substratum of fact—that Moses actually existed, and did lead the Israelites out of Egypt to freedom. While Professor Daiches is far too discreet to be engaged here in polemics, he is also concerned to rehabilitate Moses as a religious thinker of independent power, who was individually responsible (though the "Mosaic" books may contain little of his actual authorship) for the deepest insights at the root of Hebrew civilisation. In this reconstruction, Moses does not disappear into a primitive Near Eastern background, but is seen as imposing new patterns upon it, though he used existing cultural materials as historic ingredients of his new design.

Professor Daiches' method, then, consists partly of summarising the results of recent

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

research on the ancient Near East, and partly of commentary on the Pentateuch as the record of a genuine spiritual experience which resulted in the formation of a dedicated people. In the latter task, Daiches' special gifts as a literary critic are allowed some scope; and we may also sense the textual tact and responsiveness which are characteristic of the rabbinical exegetical tradition which lies in the author's family background. As a Biblical scholar, Daiches is open to the charge of being an amateur, but in what work of professional Biblical scholarship would one find a spirited rendering of the Song at the Sea into the alliterative verse which is its nearest analogue in English literature?

The doughtiest drivers dearest to Pharoah
The train of his troops he has tumbled in the tide;
Silent under sea they are sunk like a stone.

As a literary critic, he is especially aware of the unity of the Pentateuchal narrative, as in the following comment on Moses' first violent action on behalf of the Hebrews.

> The theme of the "murmurings" of the children of Israel against Moses is set thus early in the story, and in a context which introduces also another important theme in the biblical story, the education of Moses to be liberator and lawgiver. The other point about this episode is its total credibility, its lack of any mythological element, its presentation of Moses as impulsive and fallible and not someone who was heroically wise from the beginning.

If anything, I think that Daiches is rather too respectful to some of the professional scholars. For example, he accepts (probably from Dr Martin Noth) the idea that the Hebrew verb *chamad* (generally translated as "to covet") contains also the idea of "to take." This view, which reduces the Tenth Commandment to banality, was thoroughly refuted by Umberto Cassuto in his book on *Exodus*. Again, Daiches accepts Professor Albright's emendation of *"I am that I am"* to mean "He causes to be what comes into existence." All Daiches' poetic training must have cried out against this prosaic rendering, which is based on a flimsy chain of reasoning starting with certain Greek transliterations of the Tetragrammaton. The AV's "*I am that I am*" is far preferable, retaining as it does the numinous ambiguity of the original Hebrew.

Despite his concern to be unpolemical and "objective" in tone, Daiches does commit himself to some formulations of the Mosaic message which have far-reaching implications. Commenting on the words ". . . and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it", he says,

> It would be the grossest injustice, in the Mosaic view of things, for someone other than the murderer

IVERACH McDONALD
A Man of the Times
"What a stimulating experience it is! For me at any rate his book sheds an entirely fresh light on a whole series of events . . . a valuable contribution to modern history."
Fitzroy Maclean, Sunday Times
"Where Mr. McDonald has used his unique forces of information he has produced a work of first-rate historical importance."
Sidney Aster, Sunday Telegraph
"Its scope is so considerable, its insight so penetrating; it is a disarmingly humble story . . . and it is beautifully told."
James Cameron, New Statesman
£5.50

GEORGES SIMENON
Letter to my Mother
"He has thus added yet another layer to his already immense reputation as a social historian."
Richard Cobb, Guardian
"Inevitably, it will be compared with Simone de Beauvoir's haunting account of her mother's suffering and death. Both are objective, neither is dispassionate, but Simenon is a great novelist, and has not lost his creative gift."
John Raymond, Sunday Times
£2.75

Hamish Hamilton h|h

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to try and expiate the crime by offering his own life. There is no reason for not attributing this view to Moses himself: it is a central part of the Mosaic creed. Nothing could be further from the Mosaic view of divine justice than the words Milton, in Book III of *Paradise Lost*, puts into God's mouth after the fall of Adam:

> *He with his whole posterity must die.*
> *Die he or Justice must; unless for him*
> *Some other able, and as willing, pay*
> *The rigid satisfaction, death for death.*

The notion that so long as *somebody* suffers, guilty or innocent, justice is done, runs counter to the whole spirit of the Mosaic law. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is equally foreign to it: a symbolic scapegoat might carry the sins of the people away into the wilderness, but no individual could or should cleanse another person of guilt by allowing himself to be punished instead. On this point the Mosaic tradition emphatically differs from the Christian.

Bound up with this point are the radically different Mosaic and Christian interpretations of the myth of the fall of Adam, and also radically different conceptions of the character of God the Father. The relation between the Mosaic attitudes and those of Christianity is not one of "development"; it might even be truer to characterise the Christian attitudes as a *relapse* into the older concepts of vicarious punishment which Moses struggled to transcend. The Hebrew Bible does not connect the fall of Adam and Eve with Eternal Damnation, or with the Devil, or with Hell. Their punishment (as the Jews kept doggedly repeating to their Christian opponents in the medieval Disputations) was the curse of work, and the curse of death, and the curse of pain in childbirth. Moreover, the Mosaic myth of Adam contains a Promethean element quite missing in the Christian version. Adam attains "the knowledge of good and evil" and narrowly misses attaining immortality; his exit from the infantile paradise of Eden makes mankind eligible for the Torah. The Father-God in the Mosaic dispensation is, therefore, a much less fearsome figure than the Christian Father-God—who condemns all mankind to eternal damnation for the sin of Adam, and can be bought off only by the blood of his Son. Sin, in the Mosaic religion, is unmystical. It can be corrected piecemeal by individual effort. In Christianity it has become a pervasive stain that can be corrected only by cosmic means.

WHAT I MAINLY MISSED in Daiches' book was a discussion of Moses as *prophet*. This role, in the case of Moses, combines the roles of saviour, law-giver, judge and miracle-worker, as well as the less important role of "prophesier", *i.e.* foreteller of the future. But far more remarkable

new from Manchester

THE ORIGINS OF ULSTER UNIONISM **Peter Gibbon** This is the first full-length work on modern Irish history to deal primarily with popular politics. Through a series of cameos highlighting significant social events, dominant ideological and political tendencies can be seen emerging and combining.—'the most original of all recent works on the history of the North of Ireland'—*The Irish Press* *£6.00 net*

EDUCATION AND DEPRIVATION edited by **James Rushton** and **John D. Turner** Environment and attainment, parental attitudes, Educational Priority Areas, immigrant children and community schools—these are some of the subjects examined by such contributors as A. H. Halsey and Eric Midwinter who provide much material to help the teacher in the education of deprived children. *£3.00 net*

PASSION LENDS THEM POWER A STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S LOVE TRAGEDIES **Derick R. C. Marsh** Shakespeare's plays—the comedies, problem comedies, tragedies and romances—all reveal varying attitudes to love, and Professor Marsh explores the different modes and situations in which he presents the love relationship. The largest section of the book is devoted to a detailed reading of the three love tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. *£6.50 net*

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE JOHN DOHERTY 1798–1854 TRADE UNIONIST, RADICAL AND FACTORY REFORMER **R. G. Kirby** and **A. E. Musson** Generally regarded as an outstanding figure in early trade unionism, this first biography of John Doherty portrays a fascinating picture of a man deeply involved with the social problems of his day both at national and regional level. *£12.00 net*

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the range of roles that it does *not* comprise. Three roles in particular, Moses seems to have carefully refrained from playing: the role of king, the role of priest, and the role of god. Muhammad, the Moses-like figure of Islam, modelled his prophetic role on that of Moses, set up his own tribe, the Quraish, as a royal tribe from which his successors had to be appointed. The history of Islam has thus been a history of dynastic quarrels. Jesus—at least in the view of later Pauline-Christian theorists, such as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—combined all the roles which Moses rejected, being as well as prophet, king (Messiah), priest (after the order of Melchizedek) and God, all rolled into one.

The Mosaic division of roles cast its stamp on all later Judaism. The Priesthood and the Monarchy were divested of the sanctity they enjoyed in other religions. The Prophet was the perpetual outsider and critic of the Establishment who was yet the supreme repository of spiritual authority: he prevented Israel from sinking into ordinary nationhood and he reminded them continually of their universal mission to mankind. The later division of roles between Rabbi and Priest reflects the Mosaic division between Prophet and Priest; and it enabled Judaism to survive after the Roman destruction of the Temple. The concept of the Prophet, indeed, lies at the heart of Judaism; and Moses was its originator.

Unfortunately, Daiches also throws little light on the question of the origin of Monotheism. What brought about this sudden mutation in human thought? The idea that it came about gradually, by a head-by-head paring down of the pantheon, is a typical bit of 19th-century *progressisme*, now generally discarded. What, then, made Moses turn away from the Egyptian heritage in which he was reared? (Perhaps Freud was right, at least in this, that he was actually an Egyptian.) The comforting concept of Immortality, with its cult of the dead, the divinity of Nature, with Pharoah as her divine representative on earth, the whole harmonious scheme of pagan religiosity—all these were thrown aside for the bleak desert creed that man was the shaper of his own destiny, that magic was at an end, that there could be no immanent God on earth or even in the heavens, for heaven and earth were mere created things. No one has yet solved this question of the source of the Mosaic revolution; but the dramatic and controversial conception of Velikovsky—that it happened during a geological convulsion of the earth in which the umbilical cord between Man and Nature was snapped—may conceivably shed light on the general causes.

MOSHE PEARLMAN'S BOOK on Moses[3] is a good deal less serious, and I suspect that it is aimed squarely at the Barmitzvah market. Nevertheless, it scores in some respects. The pictures here are sumptuous too, and the Israeli background of the production leads to some unforgettable pages—the glowing *trompe l'oeil* double-spread of a Yemenite Passover; the Samaritan sacrifice; the glorious Chagall stained-glass windows (illustrating the Twelve Tribes) in the synagogue of the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Centre in Jerusalem. There are some good summaries of recent research, and some interesting material from Israeli scholars. In general, however, the attempts at psychological realism are merely banal; *e.g.* Moses in Midian ("he seems to have adapted well"); Moses at the Burning Bush ("all suddenly made sense"). There is also a measure of contemporary double-think. The miracles are sometimes accepted at face value, and sometimes given a naturalistic explanation. When sops are thrown in all directions, all is un-Mosaic innocuousness and inoffensiveness.

[3] *In the Footsteps of Moses.* By MOSHE PEARLMAN. Cassell, £6.50.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EAST & WEST

Letter from Madrid

Two Spains, Two Histories

By Arnold Hottinger

PROBABLY every country has a textbook, or at least one popular work of history, that differs from so-called scientific history as evolved and expounded by professional historians. This is generally associated with the fact that the production of works of general cultural influence and reference lags behind scholarship and that, at best, history teachers transmit a simplified version of the state of research prevailing when they were students. In Spain, however, the two histories diverge widely. There is a received conventional view of the Spanish past which is taught in schools and persists in university routine; and there is a history for the use of Spanish intellectuals. The point at issue is more than a mere contrast between an antiquated and an up-to-date view of the national past. These are two distinct self-portraits, and they are in turn linked with that other Iberian phenomenon known as "the two Spains."

Adherents of the two histories are consequently locked in a fierce emotional conflict. Neither group is able or willing to concede that the other has some truth on its side because what is at stake is their view of self, their way and philosophy of life, down to and including justification or rejection of the present political régime.

What is involved in these two attitudes?

The official concept of history is epitomised by the eminent historian Sanchez Albornoz (who lives in exile in Argentina) in the title of one of his principal works, *España un Enigma Histórico*. The enigma—and marvel—is that this school of historical thought asserts the existence of an entity called "Spain" which demonstrably existed at the outset of the earliest Spanish history, manifestly maintained its existence under the Romans, Goths, Arabs and kingdoms of Northern Spain, and not only found tangible expression in the Late Middle Ages, the Age of Discovery and the *Siglo de Oro*, but has survived into modern times. This enigma is construed as something inherent in the soil of the Iberian Peninsula or transmitted to later generations by an early Iberian substratum. Such is the classical Catholic version of history, only slightly secularised and reinforced with academic scholarship. Eternal Spain incorporates the land God chose to be his very own: the Catholic Spain believed in by medieval chroniclers at the time of the crusade against the Arabs of Southern Spain. That was why they christened this crusade the *Reconquista*, the "reconquest" of a peninsula which had formerly been Christian in fact and "Spanish" in theory.

The same view of history serves to justify the expulsion of the Jews and Moriscos in the fateful year of 1492. There was no legitimate place for them in a Spain bequeathed from all eternity to the Spaniards. "New Christians" who were constantly exposed to the perils of "apostasy" had to be kept orthodox by the Inquisition because it was orthodoxy which constituted the very "unity" of Spain. Bourbon absolutism and centralism adduced the same theory to justify endeavours to subordinate the Catalans to the central government and to stifle the autonomous tendencies that were always latent in provincial centres.

In official Spain, the same view prevails to this day. It furnished the Nationalist régime of the past 36 years with an opportunity to distil those "essences" from so-called national history which could be cited in justification of the régime.

GIVEN THIS STATE of affairs, it is entirely logical that the second view of "Spain's historical reality" (another book title) should derive from a champion of the Republic, Américo Castro.[1]

Philologist and literary historian, Spanish Republican ambassador in Berlin, political émigré, professor at Princeton and Harvard, and traveller in both American continents, Castro returned to Madrid late in life and eventually died of a heart attack on the Costa Brava in 1972,

[1] Américo Castro, *La Realidad Histórica de España*, edición renovada, Editorial Porrua SA (Mexico 1966). Other works by Américo Castro and relevant to the present context include *Sobre el nombre y el quién de los Españoles* (Madrid 1973); *De la edad conflictiva* (Madrid 1961); *Hacia Cervantes* (Madrid 1967); *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles* (Madrid-Barcelona 1966).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

86 years old but active to the last. As he himself liked to relate, it was his experience of the Spanish Civil War that first prompted him to inquire why the Spaniards are what they are. He began by seeking answers to this question in his own field of scholarship, literary history, and from there sallied ever deeper into his country's historical hinterland.

It was an extremely polemical reconnaissance. Opposition by professional historians drove Castro to base his view of the Spanish past on ever firmer scholarly foundations, to steep himself ever more profoundly in a world which he himself had discovered (and "unveiled" in the true sense of the word), and bring to light more and more evidence of a Spanish reality which had been deliberately buried and submerged. The end product was a whole corpus of works embracing literary criticism, the history of ideas, the philosophy of history, and a return to literature in the largest national context. From all this there emerged an essentially novel view of Spain's past and an explanation for a remarkable number of facets in the Spanish character.

The foundations of this new picture of Spanish history are quite straightforward. Castro holds that the Spaniards (or, to be more precise, the Castilians) owed what they subsequently became —and still are today—to the struggle against Moorish military and cultural superiority which the peninsula's Christian border states were compelled to wage from the 8th century onwards, and which was destined to last until the end of the 15th century. During this period the peninsula was jointly inhabited by three castes—Jews, Christians, and Arabs. Each pursued activities prescribed by force of circumstance and the traditions stemming therefrom. The Christians concentrated on the martial arts, and they developed what Castro calls "the imperative dimension of their persons", becoming adept in giving orders and securing their fulfilment. For the Jews there were spheres of intellectual activity, finance, and certain handicrafts; for the Moslem subjects of Christian masters, there remained irrigation and a few other arts and crafts.

BUT THE MEDIEVAL HARMONY that reigned between the three "peoples" was disrupted as soon as one of them succeeded in monopolising authority over the peninsula—by the conquest of Granada in 1492—and began to claim exclusive prerogatives for itself and its religion.

Castro regards the commingling of nationhood and religion as a definitely "Semitic" phenomenon, and he often draws attention to its survival in the modern Arab states and Israel. In their Christianity, the Christian Spaniards adopted an attitude similar to that which Castro would term "Semitic." It was dictated by the need to hold their own against peninsular rivals who looked upon nationhood and religion as an indivisible totality.

Those who have been in conflict for centuries often display a tendency towards mutual adaptation. The Hohenstaufen Emperor, Frederick II of Sicily, established something akin to a theocracy of his own and matched it against that of the Pope. But the Spaniards perpetuated their theocracy and their crusading wars into modern times. The voyages of discovery undertaken by men like Cortes and Pizarro were really a continuation of the Iberian holy war.

Castro devotes much attention to Santiago Matamoros (the "Slayer of Moors"), whom he regards as having been invented by the early medieval Spaniards because they needed a figure comparable to that of Mohammed, the Moslem's inspiration in battle. As late as 1821, Santiago was actually invoked as a guarantee of Spanish military success in far-off Mexico.

The Moslems disappeared from Spanish history after the conquest of Granada (though with afterpains such as the insurrections in the Alpujarras of 1501 and 1566, and their final expulsion from Spain in 1609, which probably affected 150,000 people at most). The Jews left a deeper mark behind, even though they were driven from the country as early as 1492. Recent estimates suggest that 160,000 Jews were involved, but approximately 240,000 yielded to enforced conversion. They and their descendants later became the specific targets of the Inquisition, which felt called upon to punish alleged "relapses" by enforced converts and their offspring.

Castro can take credit for having shown how deeply the question of the "New Christians"—of pure or impure blood, as the "Old Christians" saw it—not only influenced but actually governed the whole of society during the classical Spanish period. The division of labour persisted and deepened. New Christians made up an amazingly large proportion of mentally active Spaniards or "intellectuals", whereas Old Christians considered it reprehensible and dangerous to engage in intellectual activity (writing itself being suspected of a "Judaising" tendency).

The list of New Christians who played a crucial part in helping to mould Spanish intellectual life is impressively long. It includes mystics and poets, princes of the Church and inquisitors, chroniclers and prose writers (of whom Cervantes was very probably one), professional administrators and distinguished public servants. The senior nobility were related to them by marriage, as was the royal house of Castile. Fear of being taken for and treated as one "*ex illis*" (which

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could result in denunciation to the Inquisition and penalties ranging from loss of a victim's entire estate to years of imprisonment and, not infrequently, death) acted as a disincentive which held the Old Christians aloof from any form of intellectual activity. Conversely, something of a flight into intellectual life must have occurred among the New Christians; and it was prompted either by the insecurity in which they lived, or by the limited openings available to them, or by family tradition, or simply by an urge to flee the tribulations of the external world. New Christians were attracted by the emergence of any new intellectual movement in Spain, from the Erasmian form of critical Catholicism to the introspection of the Jerónimo monks or the Jesuit Order. An equally magnetic effect was exerted by princely courts, universities, and the Bohemias of the *literati*. Among Old Christians, on the other hand, military conquest and its feats of arms were deemed the sole activity worthy of a true man.

THERE IS A CLASS ASPECT to this struggle between the two castes.

The Inquisition can be seen as a tool employed by the Christian plebs of the cities in order to humble a new class of merchants, dignitaries, and royal retainers whom it could only get at by exploiting the religious and racial question. This finds its clearest illustration in the early Spanish persecutions of the Jews, beginning with the great pogrom of Seville in 1391. The Inquisition (established in 1481, abolished under Napoleon and by the Cortes of Cadiz in 1813) may, in fact, be regarded as a complex instrument which served a traditional landowning and agricultural society in its struggle against a new mercantile class. Illiterate peasants were always safe from the clutches of the Inquisition. This aspect predominated in Portugal, where a more powerful merchant class existed and where the Inquisition, in an endeavour to lay hands on its assets, remained active longer than in Spain.[2]

In Castile, by contrast, actual problems of caste appear to have been uppermost. By the 18th century the Inquisition had produced a kind of uniformity among the Castilians, most of its victims during this period being Portuguese "Marranos" who had emigrated to Spain. Conformity was, however, purchased at the expense of the spirit. Spanish universities declined to their lowest level. Spanish society became divided into a glamorous upper-crust and a folkloric—picturesque popular culture of mainly Andalusian complexion. With the exhaustion of Castile, leadership passed to the peoples on the periphery of the Iberian Peninsula (notably the Catalans, whom the Castilians had subjugated by force).

THE INFLUX OF NEW IDEAS, emanating from France, found its primary response in an aristocratic upper class which experimented with remedies for social ills while the lower orders devoted themselves to Andalusian folklore: *majismo, toros, flamenquismo, gitanería. . . .*[3] This was the period when "150,000 beggars roamed the country", and Goya painted his first pictures. It was also marked by the first experiments in land reform.

Anti-intellectualism, implanted by racial prejudice and cemented by the systematic intimidation of the Inquisition, lived on in the common people and struck a chord in the aristocracy. The positive aspect of these phenomena reposes in that which may be termed "Spanish dignity": the individual's determination to stand erect, to hold his head high and be himself. Corresponding to this is a talent for self-portraiture in life as in art: for the cultivation of façades not only in architecture but in the psychology of everyday existence. Even now, innumerable Spaniards remain well-constructed walking façades with a capacity for self-presentation, self-representation, and self-enactment. There are other undoubted concomitants of the same attitude: the theatre and a talent for drama, neither of which has ever been absent since the classical period; dancing; displays of all kinds and the ability to celebrate festivals.

THE SPANIARD'S CAPACITY for pledging himself to a belief is one of the characteristics engendered by his particular historical experience, whether that belief be the Catholic faith or political faith in Anarchy. He adopts it as his own, as a thing belonging to himself, and defends it against all comers on the principle *credo quia meum* rather than *credo quia absurdum.*

The same basic attitude continues to have its repercussions in the political sphere. The Spaniards form *bandos* or *banderías*, and their *partidos* or parties are always in danger of becoming *banderías*—in other words, combat groups which cohere less for the sake of some constructive and practical programme than because they are subordinated to an individual and dedicated to his service. The party leader

[2] For Portugal, see: Antonio José Saraiva, *Inquisição e Cristãos-novos* (Oporto 1969). This represents the Inquisition as a "Jew-factory" which used its trials to manufacture more and more "New Christians."

[3] Cf. the 18th-century tableau presented by J. Vicens Vives in *Aproximación a la historia de España* (Barcelona 1966), p. 143 et seq.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

believes in himself, and his supporters believe in him because he is *their* leader. This gives rise to powerful factions but seldom to groups that provide a matrix for new ideas. Ideas, like machines, are customarily imported from Europe and, once imported, adopted by the Spaniards as their own: as with liberalism, so with ultramontanism, socialism, anarchism, and communism. The Spanish language itself makes this easy. There is no foreign word to which the suffix "*ismo*" cannot be added, thereby fitting it to become a Spanish article of faith that takes root in Spanish soil the moment a Spaniard adopts it, that is to say, converts it into an instrument serving his own personality.

TO ME, living in Madrid, as I do, the merit, appeal and cogency of Castro's historical perspective consists in its ability to explain things that would otherwise have remained unexplained and inexplicable. It supplies aids to an analysis of the Hispanic element in Spanish history.[4] This may ultimately be what renders it so unpalatable to many Spaniards who are averse to analysing things or comprehending them in depth, who are far more inclined to affirm them without understanding them, "*quia meum*"—indeed, who feel that comprehension somehow debases what is comprehended. The "*meum*" is felt to be a vital nucleus precisely because of its inexplicability. One can draw a comparison here with Miguel de Unamuno's ultra-Hispanic concept of God, namely that He must exist because Unamuno cannot reconcile himself to the idea that *his* life may end after death. I am also reminded of a Spanish anecdote of the priest who led a far from exemplary life and was asked by some believers of a more puritanical caste how he had the gall to celebrate Mass. "When I utter the words of consecration," he replied, "God can't help Himself from descending into my hands."

From this point of view, one can very well understand why Spain, and Spanish officialdom in particular, opposed Américo Castro's historical analysis. The resistance he encountered was perhaps that which every psychoanalyst has to overcome, except that the Spanish ego is notable for its unusual strength. For that reason, he often assumed traits and used arguments which were emotional rather than rational. Naturally, too, Castro himself was accused of being "*ex illis*", if not a "*crypto-moro.*"

[4] Cf. Américo Castro, *Españoles al Márgen.* Ediciones (Madrid 1973), p. 40. The introductory essay, ("*El pueblo español*") presents a brief summary, from Castro's own pen, of his view of Spanish history.

GENERAL FRANCO instinctively sensed something of the communal dangers inherent in Spanish personalism ("individualism" is the conventional term, but it fails to convey the whole meaning). He made it his practice to warn the Spaniards against their "*demonios familiares*" and pursue a policy that counteracted them. He always held the egos of his ministers and subjects in equilibrium. None was permitted to gain the upper hand. If one tried to, his resignation lay ready in the Caudillo's desk drawer (every minister had to submit one on appointment), and Franco would not hesitate to send it to his home with a pair of motor-cycle dispatch-riders who were known in the political slang of the capital as "death's angels."

But Franco held the "*demonios*" in check from the Right wing, which meant that he always had to keep the Left wing under vigorous pressure. The instrument he used for this purpose was the State trade-union organisation, whose officials wielded an authority backed by the various police apparatuses and, ultimately, by the Army. Franco's successor could well find it hard to pursue the same policy. If he tries, he will run the risk that his over-extended instrument of power may turn against him. If he wants to assert his authority, he will probably have to maintain a policy that puts a brake on the various *cabecillas* —"gang leaders" or *caciques*—who can hardly fail to resist. But this brake would now have to be operated from the centre, with pressure applied in roughly equal measure to the "*bandos*" of the Right and Left. The political rewards will probably go to those who not only know how to form groups and "lead them into the fray" but are able to evolve a few constructive ideas and willing to exert an innovating influence.

Today, Franco's successor is faced with the delicate task of shifting his position. He has been installed by the Right, but his régime is likely to be short-lived if he tries to continue governing from there. Franco passed on without ever heeding the advice of his more intelligent supporters, who urged him to prepare his successor a power-base at the centre of the political spectrum. This power-base must now be improvised, and there is no certainty that it can be. If the attempt fails, we must reckon with a renewed period of conflict in which Hispanic "*bandos*"—doubtless mustered under the contemporary banners of "Capitalism" and "Socialism"—will become embroiled in a clash between their overbred "imperative dimensions" and without any too subtle analysis of their own real motives for combat.

I STILL RECALL a hot summer's noon in the prosperous Calle del Segre, in the comfortable

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"American" quarter of Madrid.

"But surely," I said to the wise aged scholar who strode so briskly along beside me, "—surely prosperity and industrial modernisation have transformed the Spaniards. They have less reason than ever before in their history to turn and rend each other." His only response was an old man's smile and the words: "*You* will live to see it. . . ." He is dead now, leaving behind a massive and inspiring *oeuvre* of vibrant intensity. But, it comes too late to assist the present turning-point in Spain. Few of the country's rulers have read Castro's books. They are read in the ranks of the Opposition, but they are largely rejected because of their incompatibility with the Marxist doctrinal atmosphere that prevails there. The Spaniards are embarking on a "new era" in their history unequipped with the self-knowledge that stares up at them from the printed pages of open books.

The Witch's Manuscript

Any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half-witch, half-wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty.

VIRGINIA WOOLF, *A Room of One's Own*

How can I hold this tongue, this eel that skews
from heart to throat, rattles down the dales,
spreads frothing over cobbles, riots like ale
on market-days, spills barrels of green fruits,
swings like a barn-door till the stones fly in?
Lies pelt bare breasts of truth. Run, mother, run!

Hived in my hut, I gossip with the fire.
Wind calls through cracks, the raining's all of words.
"Be quiet", I mutter. Rags of my cindery bed
nudge me with husbands. Yes, this flesh was byre
to many, while the squeezed juice of my soul
sprang to the ceiling, left a dry corndoll.

Wind has a song too, pipes a plainchant swell
from Abbey stone. There, wifeless men snare truth
in inks and snow-white vellum. No red mouth,
no herbs or snakeskins rhymed a stronger spell!
Words preen like bishops on a bench, strange flowers
softly entwine the capitals of power.

Cover me, seas of singing, stop my heart
and throat before another night's command.
In darkness every word's a furious brand
that lights an ankle-snapping fire. I mount
black clouds and ride upon a storm of cries,
hugging a stick as red claws reach my thighs.

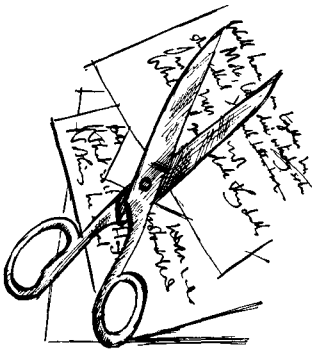
Carol Rumens

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For whom the scissors cut

How to improve Hemingway (Moscow style)

By Julius Telesin



ONE OF THE many genres of Russian *samizdat* consists of lists of cuts made by the censor in official Soviet publications. Perhaps the most famous of these are the cuts in Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*. "Snipology"—the study of these censorship cuts—is a very young science. Not only has it so far failed to systematise and summarise the material plentifully supplied by the Soviet censorship, but it has also neglected the primary task of collecting this material.

One particular branch of Snipology—the study of cuts in official Russian translations of foreign authors—is still in its infancy. It might seem that there could be nothing simpler than comparing an original with its official translation. But to do this it is necessary at the very least to have both these texts available. Yet even at this stage the geographical factor plays an adverse role, and one which works in both the Soviet Union and the West in different, directly opposite directions. While it is by no means easy to obtain the original foreign text in Russia, it is no easier to find a Russian translation in the West. For example, what Anglo-American university will waste money ordering the English classics in Russian?

There are also difficulties of another sort: things are no better in the Soviet Union where knowledge of foreign languages is concerned. In the West, Sovietologists have little time for collecting factual information since they are mainly concerned with conceptual thought, and no doubt the latter activity, albeit based on fewer facts, is still a more honourable one than the mere *accumulation* of facts.

In the late 1960s someone in Moscow compiled a list of cuts in Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. In all likelihood this was carried out by a comparison not with the English original, but with a *samizdat* translation of the novel. This circulated shortly before the appearance in 1968 of a four-volume official edition of Hemingway. It is possible in fact that the uncontrolled circulation of the *samizdat* edition of the novel, in which everything was translated indiscriminately, prompted the appearance of an official "revised" edition. It was not for nothing that the *samizdat* edition was frequently confiscated during house searches by the "Thought Police", although so far I have no actual evidence of its being used as incriminating material at a trial.

COMPARISON OF THE TEXTS reveals seventeen cuts. While I was still living in Moscow a copy of this list of cuts came into my possession, and I noted their position in my copy of the official edition by means of asterisks and inserted slips with the text of the cuts. Some of the shorter excisions I wrote in by hand. Shortly after my emigration to Israel I managed to retrieve my copy, together with its "palimpsest" corrections. These are now given below in numbered order with page references to both the English and Russian editions; the first number refers to the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1973), the second to volume 3 of the official Soviet edition. The material cut by the Russian censor in the official Soviet edition is set in **bold face**. The "rationale" behind each cut is then briefly explained.

1

HOW WOULD THAT premise stand up if he examined it? That was probably why the Communists were always cracking down on Bohemianism. **When you were drunk or when you committed either fornication or adultery you recognised your own personal fallibility of that so mutable substitute for the apostles' creed, the party line.** Down with Bohemianism, the sin of Mayakovsky.

JULIUS TELESIN *is a Russian mathematician, and was an activist in Moscow* samizdat *and human rights circles, as he describes in his foreword to Peter Reddaway's* Uncensored Russia *(Cape, 1972). He left Russia in 1970 and lives in Israel. His article "Inside Samizdat" appeared in the February 1973 issue of* ENCOUNTER.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But Mayakovsky was a saint again. That was because he was safely dead. You'll be safely dead yourself, he told himself. Now stop thinking that sort of thing. Think about Maria.

(*p. 159; p. 284*)

THE VICES mentioned here are just not to be found among communists. The party line is *immutable*. To compare it with religion is a blasphemy.

2/3

GAYLORD'S was the place where you met famous peasant and worker Spanish commanders who had sprung to arms from the people at the start of the war without any previous military training and found that many of them spoke Russian. That had been the first big disillusion to him a few months back and he had started to be cynical to himself about it. But when he realised how it happened it was all right. They *were* peasants and workers. They had been active in the 1934 revolution and had to flee the country when it failed and in Russia they had sent them to the military academy **and to the Lenin Institute the Comintern maintained** so they would be ready to fight the next time and have the necessary military education to command.

The Comintern had educated them there. In a revolution you could not admit to outsiders who helped you nor that anyone knew more than he was supposed to know. He had learned that. If a thing was right fundamentally the lying was not supposed to matter.

(*p. 220; p. 354*)

THE REASON for these cuts is explained by Hemingway himself in the last paragraph of the passage cited.

4

KASHKIN HAD MADE HIM OUT to be a hell of a fellow and Karkov had at first been insultingly polite and then, when Robert Jordan had not played at being a hero but had told a story that was really funny and obscenely discreditable to himself, Karkov had shifted from the politeness to a relieved rudeness and then to insolence and they had become friends.

Kashkin had only been tolerated there. There was something wrong with Kashkin evidently and he was working it out in Spain. They would not tell him what it was but maybe they would now that he was dead. Anyway, he and Karkov had become friends and he had become friends too with the incredibly thin, drawn, dark, loving, nervous, deprived, and unbitter woman with a lean, neglected body and dark grey-streaked hair cut short who was Karkov's wife and who served as an interpreter with the tank corps. He was a friend too of Karkov's mistress, who had cat-eyes, reddish gold hair (sometimes more red; sometimes more gold, depending on the coiffeurs), a lazy sensual body (made to fit well against other bodies), a mouth made to fit other mouths, and a stupid, ambitious, and utterly loyal mind. This mistress loved gossip and enjoyed a periodically controlled promiscuity which seemed only to amuse Karkov. Karkov was supposed to have another wife somewhere beside the tank-corps one, maybe two more, but nobody was very sure about that. Robert Jordan liked both the wife he knew and the mistress. He thought he would probably like the other wife, too, if he knew her, if there was one. Karkov had good taste in women.

There were sentries with bayonets downstairs outside the porte-cochère at Gaylord's and tonight it would be the pleasant and . . . .

(*pp. 222–223; p. 357*)

KARKOV is a communist VIP (see text of cut 15). His moral code would therefore not permit him three wives and a mistress to boot.

5

GOLZ WAS A good general and a fine soldier but they always kept him in a subordinate position and never gave him a free hand. This attack was going to be his biggest show so far and Robert Jordan did not like too much what he had heard about the attack. **Then there was Gall, the Hungarian, who ought to be shot if you could believe half you heard at Gaylord's. Make it if you can believe ten per cent of what you heard at Gaylord's, Robert Jordan thought.**

He wished that he had seen the fighting on the plateau beyond Guadalajara when they beat the Italians. But he had been down . . . .

(*p. 224; p. 358*)

AN OBVIOUS absurdity. If the communist Gall ought to have been shot, they would have shot him already. So there could not have been a Comrade Gall—either "then" or at any other time.

6

THEY WERE Communists and they were disciplinarians. The discipline that they would enforce would make good troops. Lister was murderous in discipline. **He was a true fanatic and he had the complete Spanish lack of respect for life. In few armies since the**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tartar's first invasion of the West were men executed summarily for as little reason as they were under his command. But he knew how to forge a division into a fighting unit.

(*p. 225; p. 359*)

A "SLANDEROUS FACT." Communists execute only for serious crimes.

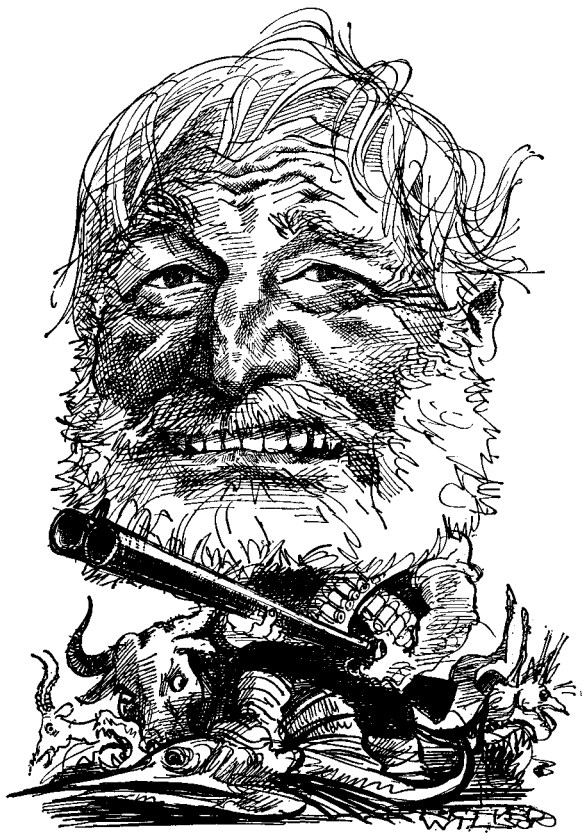
7

"GOOD," she said. Then, "Oh, Roberto, I am sorry I have failed thee. Is there not some other thing I can do for thee?"

He stroked her head and kissed her and then lay close and relaxed beside her, listening to the quiet of the night.

"Thou canst talk with me of Madrid," he said and thought: "I'll keep any over-supply of that for to-morrow. I'll need all of that there is to-morrow. **There are no pine needles that need that now as I will need it to-morrow. Who was it cast his seed upon the ground in the Bible? Onan. How did Onan turn out? he thought. I don't remember ever hearing any more about Onan.** He smiled in the dark.

(*p. 324; p. 471*)



THE BIBLE . . . Onan . . . certainly very disagreeable and un-Marxist themes! Why include them at all?

8/9/10

WHEN he came into the room, Karkov went at once to the woman in the uniform and bowed to her and shook hands. She was his wife and he said something to her in Russian that no one could hear and for a moment the insolence that had been in his eyes as he entered the room was gone. Then it lighted again as he saw the mahogany-coloured head and the love-lazy face of the well-constructed girl **who was his mistress** and he strode with short, precise steps over to her and bowed **and shook her hand in such a way that no one could tell it was not a mimicry of his greeting to his wife.** His wife had not looked after him as he walked across the room. She was standing with a tall, good-looking Spanish officer and they were talking Russian now.

"Your great love is getting a little fat", Karkov was saying to the girl. "All of our heroes are fattening now as we approach the second year." He did not look at the man he was speaking of.

"You are so ugly you would be jealous of a toad", the girl told him cheerfully. She spoke in German. "Can I go with thee to the offensive to-morrow?"

(*pp. 337–8; p. 487*)

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN unpardonable carelessness on the censor's part not to have performed this surgery, having already removed item 4 (above).

11/12

KARKOV went over to him and the man said, "I only have it now. Not ten minutes ago. It is wonderful. All day the fascists have been fighting among themselves near Segovia. They have been forced to quell the mutinies with automatic rifle and machine-gun fire. In the afternoon they were bombing their own troops with planes."

"Yes?" asked Karkov.

"That is true", the puffy-eyed man said. "Dolores brought the news herself. She was here with the news and was in such a state of radiant exultation as I have never seen. The truth of the news shone from her face. **That great face—" he said happily.**

"That great face", Karkov said with no tone in his voice at all.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"If you could have heard her", the puffy-eyed man said. "The news itself shone from her with a light that was not of this world. In her voice you could tell the truth of what she said. I am putting it in an article for *Izvestia*. It was one of the greatest moments of the war to me when I heard the report in that great voice where pity, compassion, and truth are blended. Goodness and truth shine from her as from a true saint of the people. Not for nothing is she called La Pasionaria."

"Not for nothing", Karkov said in a dull voice. "You'd better write it for *Izvestia* now, before you forget that last beautiful lead."

"That is a woman that is not to joke about. Not even by a cynic like you", the puffy-eyed man said. "If you could have been here to hear her and to see her face."

"That great voice", Karkov said. "That great face. Write it," he said, "Don't tell it to me. Don't waste whole paragraphs on me. Go and write it now."

(*p. 338–9; p. 488*)

THE FAMOUS "PASIONARIA" of the Spanish Communist Party, Dolores Ibarruri, is a sacrosanct personality and not to be mocked. Also, Karkov could not be a cynic.

13/14

I REMEMBER when I thought Largo was O.K. Durruti was good and his own people shot him there at the Puente de los Franceses. Shot him because he wanted them to attack. Shot him in the glorious discipline of indiscipline. **The cowardly swine.** Oh muck them all to hell and be damned. And that Pablo that just mucked off with my exploder and my box of detonators. Oh muck him to deepest hell. But no. He's mucked us instead. They always muck you instead from Cortez, and Menéndez de Avila down to Miaja. Look at what Miaja did to Kleber. The bald egotistical swine. The stupid egg-headed bastard. Muck all the insane, egotistical, treacherous swine that have always governed Spain and ruled her armies. Muck everybody but the people **and then be damned careful what they turn into when they have power.**

His rage began to thin as he exaggerated more and more. . . .

(*p. 350; p. 501*)

A SLIGHT on intrepid revolutionaries is not permissible. The reflection on people's power is "Crimethink."

15

MASSART stood up. He did not like Karkov, but Karkov, coming from *Pravda* and in direct communication with Stalin, was at this moment one of the **three** most important men in Spain.

(*p. 398; p. 556*)

IF the number remained, every reader would immediately wonder who the three were. And such curiosity is not only absolutely unnecessary but even harmful, because he would perhaps discover that the "most important men"—the Consul-General at Barcelona, V. Antonov-Ovseyenko; his assistant A. Stashevsky; the Soviet Ambassador in Madrid, M. Rosenberg, General I. Berzin and others—were shot as "enemies of the people." He could also quite easily discover that the name Karkov ("one of the three") is a cover for the *Pravda* correspondent Mikhail Koltsov, who was also shot as an "enemy of the people." Then the Russian reader of Hemingway might be tempted to ask: how is it possible that such a glorious communist past could have been created by such bad characters?

It could be objected that many of them were posthumously "rehabilitated." But the official Soviet publication *Literary Gazette* (26 June 1968, Censor A-00830) gave the official explanation:

> "Shortly before the end of the war he [Solzhenitsyn] was condemned on a charge of anti-Soviet activities and received his punishment in the camps. In 1957 he was rehabilitated."

As there can be no *punishment* without a *crime*, the quote clearly demonstrates that rehabilitation does not remove guilt. A man is merely forgiven (perhaps temporarily); his past is not forgotten.

The reader of Hemingway who prefers to ignore the *Literary Gazette*'s explanation and continues in the belief that rehabilitated men are good, might ask a still more inappropriate question: why are the persecutors of these good people still at large, often occupying important posts?

All these undesirable trains of thought can be avoided very simply: excise the unfortunate word "three."

16/17

BUT KARKOV had this belief in the good which could come from his own accessibility and the humanising possibility of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

benevolent intervention. **It was the one thing he was never cynical about.**

"You know when I am in the U.S.S.R. people write to me in *Pravda* when there is an injustice in a town in Azerbaijan. Did you know that? They say, 'Karkov will help us.'"

André Massart looked at him with no expression on his face except anger and dislike. There was nothing in his mind now but that Karkov had done something against him. All right, Karkov, power and all, could watch out.

"This is something else", Karkov went on, "but it is the same principle. I am going to find out just how untouchable you are, Comrade Massart. **I would like to know if it could not be possible to change the name of that tractor factory."**

André Massart looked away from him and back to the map. (*p. 400; p. 559*)

IN THIS PASSAGE Hemingway not only persists in his error about Karkov's cynicism but goes even further. It emerges that the only subject to which his cynicism does not extend is not the general Party line (in that case his cynicism in other matters might be forgiven), but something much more trivial—namely, petty-bourgeois benevolent intervention!

IT IS TIME TO EXPLAIN an essential detail of censorship improvement. A fictional character, the French communist VIP André Massart, is replaced in the Russian text with the very concrete André Marty, who is the real prototype of Massart. Why did the censors replace the hero with his prototype? Why did this not happen in other cases? For instance, Karkov is not replaced by Koltsov, or the puffy-eyed man by Ilya Ehrenburg. Is there perhaps a general rule which the censors apply as a guide when deciding whether or not to replace a hero by his prototype?

The present writer has formulated a scientific law which will form a part of his doctoral thesis in Snipology.

The point is that of all the heroes in the novel only André Massart satisfies two basic conditions: the hero's character is negative and his prototype is also negative. This is not the case elsewhere. Although Koltsov, Karkov's prototype, was shot as an "enemy of the people", his literary image is positive in the novel. Or rather it became so after the censor's benevolent intervention. Therefore one cannot replace Karkov by Koltsov—it would then turn out that a good man had been shot.

Although the puffy-eyed man is portrayed as something of a fool, he is absolutely free of any corrosive scepticism and can be regarded as a positive character. Despite his timid attempts to spoil his reputation in the last few years of his life, his prototype was not excommunicated. And in such a case there is no need to replace the hero by his prototype—it is simply not worth while.

FINALLY, IF ONE imagines a negative character with a positive prototype the change is simply inadmissible. It would be an act of sabotage. The results can thus be summed up in the following table:

CHARACTER	PROTOTYPE	IS A CHANGE NECESSARY?
+	+	No
+	−	No
−	+	No
−	−	Yes

Here then is our rule: *only two negatives can make a positive.*

Now it only remains to explain the contents of the last line in the table above. A negative hero must be replaced by his negative prototype for two reasons. (*1*) The reader must not confuse a real negative prototype of a negative character with somebody positive. In order to avoid such a misunderstanding the best way is simply to merge the two together. (*2*) Here is further proof of, so to speak, the negative of a negative prototype—in order to bury him still more deeply.

So André Massart *must* be replaced by André Marty in order that the Soviet reader should not think that such a bloodthirsty nonentity as Massart is shown to be in Hemingway's novel had not yet been exposed. Also, the Soviet reader is intended to wax wroth yet again at that

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

loathsome anti-party fractionary element, André Marty.

Actually Marty has been exposed for what he is. Otherwise the shipyard in Nikolaev (a tractor factory in the novel—see item 17) named after him would not have been renamed, as it was in reality. This renaming of the factory provides a simple explanation of the final censored passage. Since the factory called after Marty no longer bears his name it could therefore never have had such a name. (Here the argument exerts a fairly serious demand on the reader's logic.) At any time, in past, present, or future, it could only have had a "good" name, and nothing but a good name. But André Marty turned out to be a bad man (since the factory was renamed!). Ergo, he could *never* have been good.

IT WOULD BE NO little source of East-West-cultural enlightenment if the dialectical philosophers of Bolshevik censorship were to discuss their own work. But then Hemingway once warned, if in another context, "Talk about it, and you lose it. . . ."

AUTHORS

Malcolm Bradbury is Professor of American Literature, University of East Anglia. A collection of his stories, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, which includes his story in the current issue, "A Goodbye for Evadne Winterbottom" and "Composition" (ENCOUNTER, December 1973 and March 1975), will be published in the autumn by Secker & Warburg, who last year brought out his most recent novel, *The History Man.*

John Wain is Professor of Poetry, University of Oxford; his Oxford lectures (including "On the Breaking of Forms" and "Alternative Poetry", ENCOUNTER, August 1975 and June 1974) will be included in his forthcoming book, *Professing Poetry.* In the 1974 he was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for his biography of Samuel Johnson, published by Macmillan who in 1975 brought out his epic poem, *Feng.*

François Bondy is an editor of *Die Weltwoche* and of the leading Swiss monthly, *Schweizer Monatshefte,* Zurich.

R. W. Burchfield is Chief Editor of the Oxford English dictionaries and Editor of *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary:* (Vol. I (A–G) appeared in 1972 and Vol. II (H–N) will be published later this year.

Geoffrey Bownas is Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield. He co-edited with Anthony Thwaite *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse* (1964) and with Yukio Mishima *New Writing in Japan* (Penguin, 1972).

Hyam Maccoby is Librarian of Leo Baeck College, London, and author of *Revolution in Judaea* (Orbach & Chambers, 1973). His article "Is the Political Jesus Dead?" appeared in the February issue of ENCOUNTER.

Arnold Hottinger is Foreign Correspondent for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung.* He is the author of several books on "Mediterranean subjects" including studies of Arab and Spanish history.

STUDENT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

FULL-TIME students can subscribe to ENCOUNTER at special reduced annual rates. These are: U.K. £4·40; U.S.A. and Canada $12·50; elsewhere £5·00. Please state place and course of study.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMOIR

Michael Ayrton

By T. G. Rosenthal

"WHY", said the Editor of this journal, "was he so eclectic?" "Because", said the writer of this article, faced over a dinner table a few days after Michael Ayrton's death with the need to produce an instant answer, "he was not educated." A typical dinner-table exchange? Glib, superficial? Yes, possibly, even probably but not, I think, certainly. As Ayrton's fellow-member of the Brains Trust, Professor Joad, might have put it, it depends what you mean by eclectic and in particular whether that word is used pejoratively; and if eclecticism in the pursuit of originality is no vice, education in the pursuit of learned conventionality is no virtue.

Had Michael Ayrton, the son of a fiercely feminist socialist mother, Barbara Ayrton, and the mildly ineffectual but amiable socialist literary critic, Gerald Gould, been fully educated within even the most enlightened sectors of the English system, he would assuredly have been a duller, less original and far less talented man. Fortunately, at the age of 14, he incurred the unfavourable notice of the headmaster of his boarding school who summoned Gerald Gould in a phraseology which caused that worthy man to fear the worst and prepare for yet another pale, rather shameful little episode of the kind of which countless autobiographical sketches and, God help us, whole English novels have been made. When told that young Ayrton had indulged in neither mutual masturbation nor buggery, but had actually slept with a girl, his father was so relieved, not to say delighted, that he removed his son with pleased alacrity. Thus from the age of 14 onwards Michael wandered abroad and became first a teenage autodidact, and then a youthful prodigy, and then a mature and brilliant artist.

Painter – sculptor – draughtsman – engraver – portraitist – stage designer – book illustrator – novelist – short-story writer – essayist – critic – art-historian – broadcaster – film-maker. There were probably other artistic functions, but, in the fifteen or so years that I knew him, those were the facets of his work I came to know and admire. As a person he also had prodigious gifts as a clubman, a wit, a conversationalist and a friend. He hated cricket and scorned any *organised* conviviality. But put him at one of the large tables at the Savile Club, or at the head of his own table in that glorious, totally Ayrton-stamped, 13th-century house in Essex where his wife Elisabeth, a notable expert on English cooking, kept their guests in a state of permanent gluttony, and you had a magnetic and irresistible personality.

If ever a man needed a Boswell, it was Ayrton (and if ever a man would have loathed the very idea, it was he). He was a supreme raconteur and anecdotalist, each story honed and polished for maximum suspense, joy, and amusement, but the stories were impoverished without that mellifluous, ironic voice. Like most substantial artists, he was an egotist; and he liked to converse because he liked to argue, and to learn, and was in fact omnivorous for knowledge, craving the didacticism of his peers in other fields. He loved to shine in company, and could shine anywhere; but, as any student of English society and culture knows, the greatest crime is to be too clever by half. It's all part of a British aberration, fostered perhaps by the dottier followers of the wretched Dr Arnold, that you must never be seen to be *trying*: if you really are brighter than the other fellow you'd better not show it and if you want to get ahead, keep your talent under your hat for as long as you possibly can.

THE WIT AND WISDOM of Michael Ayrton were, I think, among the chief reasons for his lack of true recognition. They were too public, too flamboyant. A man who can perform in front of a television camera with greater skill and professionalism than those who are supposed to sit in judgment over him is not likely to be popular. A man who writes better about aesthetic matters than those whose principal livelihood it is to do just that tends to garner not wholly favourable notices. One of my bonds with Michael was the distrust of most critics, particularly those who wrote exclusively about art, and his undisguised scorn did him little good with opinion-makers. For Michael, criticism, like patriotism, was not enough. As an art critic, I survived with him because the act of criticism occupied a proper place in my scheme of things. For several years I was a regular reviewer and, apart from looking at pictures, which was what one did anyway, the copy was written between lunch and dinner on Sunday and dropped into the editor's office on

MICHAEL AYRTON, *sculptor, painter, novelist, critic, died on 16 November 1975 at the age of 54.* T. G. ROSENTHAL *is Managing Director of Secker & Warburg, the London publishers.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Monday morning. It never interfered with being a director of a large publishing-house which Michael, having been Art Critic of the *Spectator,* perfectly appreciated. He would never accept that a few hundred words a week was a sufficient task for a man; he knew how it was done, and it was too easy by half.

There is a clue in Michael's relationship to criticism to the relationship of critics to him. He thought their work essentially simple if not actually nugatory, and he rarely bothered to hide this. At the same time, because his mind moved fast and he always wanted to find something new to do, he rarely gave critics any carefully programmed development to latch on to; so that even if he had not alienated them with his scorn, he offended them with, in their terms, an ever-increasing inconsistency.

Thus one had the spectacle of a boy-wonder becoming a prophet without honour, all in the space of one generation. The obvious explanation is, of course, the excessive versatility. But if versatility is normally a virtue, why, in Ayrton's case, should it be a misdemeanour, as it evidently was? (The old English tag, about cobblers and lasts?) Versatility in the visual arts alone would probably have been quite acceptable, indeed encouraged; it was all those other activities that got a bit much.

The young Ayrton, having parlayed his expulsion from school into a precocious European grand tour, began his artistic career with a show at the Leicester Galleries in 1942 when he was only 21; and in the same year he collaborated with John Minton in the stage designs for John Gielgud's *Macbeth.* This wasn't a bad start for someone with no formal art training. In the late 40s he painted in Wales with Graham Sutherland, to whom a splendid Ayrton landscape once belonged. Critics like Bryan Robertson regarded Ayrton, together with near-contemporaries like Minton and Sutherland, as among the great white hopes of English painting in the 40s and early 50s. Robertson bestowed on Ayrton what used to be one of the accolades of the English art scene, a Whitechapel retrospective as early as 1955.

It was an auspicious beginning, but one from which, critically speaking, he never looked forward. Gradually, as he changed dealers (and then, for some years, did without dealers at all), as his work grew and varied and metamorphosed, so his reputation among his friends and admirers expanded and consolidated and his reputation in the world of the visual arts, the world that most mattered to him, dwindled.

He had the temerity to become a man of many media and always with that consummate verbal fluency, that total articulateness which so often left not less intelligent but simply less verbally gifted people floundering. There are still those who prefer their artist types to be incoherent unless they have a brush in their hand.

WHEN I FIRST MET Michael Ayrton—we were fellow judges of an appalling painting competition in a small provincial town—we spent our modest fee, a fiver apiece in cash, in the nearest pub on substantial quantities of whisky and, within the hour, were fighting each other for the truest stranglehold on the great Hector Berlioz. Later he was to give me a copy of his book *Berlioz: A Singular Obsession* inscribed simply: "For Tom, a fellow obsessionist, from Michael, 1969." The year was the centenary of the composer's death. I brought that arch-Berliozian, David Cairns, the superlative translator of the *Memoirs*, and Ayrton together at my dinner table and watched them trade ever more recondite and arcane minutiae. Michael introduced me to *La Mort de Cleopatre* and that seductive noise reverberated repeatedly through the Ayrton household at Bradfields (you can't play Berlioz *pianissimo*, even at three in the morning. On the wall was an oil of Hector which Michael had painted with those gimmicky eyes that appear to follow you around the room). I once told him of a rare full-scale staging of *The Damnation of Faust* in which the set was substantially inspired by Piranesi's *Carceri*, for Michael one of the greatest sequences of engravings in the Western World, and it was a perfect "Ayrtonian" consummation. In a dazzling short story he created (or, as he would have put it, recreated) in "An Episode in the Life of a Gambler", an encounter between Berlioz and the condemned poet, gambler, and murderer Pierre Lacenaire, a brief work of considerable deductive scholarship and macabre wit.

The Berlioz theme is, in fact, central to any understanding of Michael because it crystallised so many facets of his life and work; the informed passion for music, the great appeal of the Romantic Movement in which his admiration for Piranesi and his influence on the Romantic Imagination figured so largely; the worship of the underrated Ingres, whose drawings Michael saw as one of the high points of 19th-century art: in fact, a plural obsession with the giants of the last century. His homage took the form of drawings, paintings, bronzes, and also a remarkable BBC-Television programme to celebrate the centenary of Berlioz's death. As Ayrton himself wrote, it was "the realisation of the private dream of a far from fashionable sculptor and painter about the personality and the music of a composer and writer who is only now becoming fashionable a century after his death. . . ."

I suspect that Michael in his later years, if one can speak of the later years of a man wantonly

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

removed at 54, identified more and more with Berlioz, not with the habitual paranoia of the artist (he knows he's a genius, but the world's against him) but with the sense of being so unrecognised and under-rewarded as to feel himself to be an outsider. Berlioz was indeed a Protean outsider, and Ayrton felt himself to be much the same. In a way the association was beneficial because intellectually stimulating; in another, it induced in him a blind spot about the painted results of his singular obsession which, at a crucial stage in his career, adversely affected a major commercial opportunity.

ONE OF HIS EARLIER IDOLS was Wyndham Lewis. When the National Book League launched an enterprising series of exhibitions entitled *Word and Image* devoted to the more interesting British Writer/Painters of our time, it was appropriate not only that they should start with Lewis and Ayrton but also that they should be shown jointly. I wrote the catalogue introduction, and I was struck by one passage from Ayrton's brief memoir of Lewis, "The Enemy as Friend" (it can be found in Ayrton's last and best collection of essays, *The Rudiments of Paradise*):

> "... in the Redfern Gallery, during his 1949 show, when I wandered in to find two silent figures contemplating the exhibits. One of these was Mr T. S. Eliot, dressed with quiet elegance in a blue business suit, stooped like a benevolent osprey and gazing intently at Lewis's early self-portrait. This imposing picture shows the artist gazing stonily out from the canvas and wearing a large, fierce hat. The sole other occupant of the room was Mr Lewis himself, wearing a large, fierce hat and gazing stonily at his own portrait of Mr Eliot, a picture in which the poet is dressed with quiet elegance in a blue business suit. ..."

Ayrton always had a high sense of the absurd; but he also was an exceptionally kind man and went on to record how, when Lewis was blind and luxuries rare, Eliot used to send him champagne (which, together with caviare and walnut cake, evidently comprised his chief solace in his declining years).

Wyndham Lewis had once had, to say the least, unfortunate right-wing and anti-Semitic tendencies which he shared with other pillars of the Modern Movement as part of the strange English cultural heritage which believed in the rightness of the Right and the wrongness of the Jews. To Michael, with Zangwill blood in his veins, and with a passionate commitment to a non-Communist, neo-Orwellian Left, nothing could have been more anathematic.

Yet, as is well known, Lewis had recanted, and the friendship between them was such that, for a time, Ayrton was Lewis's visual amanuensis, designing Lewis's book jackets, and letting the great *blind* man choose and, where necessary, describe the alterations he wanted made. In retrospect, Lewis and Ayrton were soul-mates, both hating "the Enemy", with a violent iconoclasm, switching with ease from pen to brush. Both had superb critical gifts; both saw draughtsmanship as the true beginning of painting; both, by their differing physical afflictions, were hampered in the realisation of a prolific output (although both left, none the less, a prodigious amount of material). Both wielded a dreadful scourge when faced with cant, pretension, pomposity or hypocrisy. Both, more than anyone else this century, tried to record faces for our intellectual posterity, Lewis usually with large-scale oils, Ayrton usually with drawings. Significantly, one of Ayrton's relatively few oil portraits, and perhaps the best formal portrait he painted, was of Wyndham Lewis in 1955 shortly before his death. Ayrton and his wife came to offer condolences to Mrs Lewis, and found that workmen had already arrived to tear down the building. In a frenzy they managed to rescue, from a laundry basket, the contents of the disused studio. As Ayrton wrote: "Among those we rescued was a large pencil drawing of Ezra Pound, with half the head torn away. This half head, in due time, I replaced. It was my last act as a sort of substitute for the eyes of Wyndham Lewis. ..."

With much of Lewis's angularity, but with his own, spiky, idiosyncratic draughtsmanship, he gave us, with an occasional virtuoso oil such as that of Constant Lambert, superb drawings of Dylan Thomas, Henry Moore, William Golding, Norman Douglas, William Walton, Christopher Isherwood, and many more. Michael was not a formal portraitist in the sense that people paid him; he simply painted or drew those whose personalities or faces particularly interested him (and, preferably, who were friends). As with Lewis, a considerable section of English cultural life, and a characteristically eclectic one at that, will be known, where the camera is not considered enough, by his portraits.

Ayrton combined, to an unusual degree in an artist, generosity for others and an inability to hide his sense of injustice at the lack of recognition of himself and the excess of it, in his view, received by others. For those, such as Moore or Giacometti, whom he idolised and loved, his praise could not be too great. About those of his contemporaries and near-contemporaries with their Tate and Hayward retrospectives and their decorations, he was, often with justice, scathing. Was he jealous of their greater recognition? He simply felt that he had been neglected. An honorary doctorate from Exeter University was slim pickings for three full decades in the public eye. This is not to suggest that he felt superior to

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his contemporaries; he just knew enough to know what they had done, and how yet, typically, in his own collection he had a not inconsiderable selection of works by his contemporaries.

He stimulated, when I was at Thames and Hudson, the definitive book on Wyndham Lewis's art, and caused me to rescue from oblivion, at Secker & Warburg, Lewis's savage satire of the world of Arnold Bennett and Desmond McCarthy, *The Roaring Queen*.[1] His political passions prompted the publication of the first solid and full-length book on the Colonels and why they were doomed to fail, *Greece under Military Rule*.

AS A CRITIC Ayrton was primarily constructive, and revelled in the opportunity of sharing a discovery; and here, again, his eclecticism, springing from his lack of formal education, was valuable. Had he progressed from, say, Cambridge to the Courtauld he would doubtless have published learned articles in scholarly journals which would, inevitably, have been read only by other scholars. As it was, he wrote his articles, gave his lectures, made his broadcasts on a great variety of topics to as wide an audience as possible.

In his essay "The Terrible Survivor" in which there is a learned account of Barna di Siena he wrote: "I am not a scholar but rather a celebrant" and it's a fine distinction. For a total understanding of Piero della Francesca one has recourse to the work of the art historians. But if one wants an insight into the effect upon the viewer of a key work by that Umbrian genius and of his exact *placing* in that still timeless world, one must read Ayrton's short, intense, utterly personal and convincing essay on his own discovery of Piero's *La Madonna del Parto* in the tiny little hill-town of Monterchi. It was in that spirit also that he made his one full-scale art-historical effort, a monograph, the first and most comprehensive (including a catalogue raisonné) in English on Giovanni Pisano. Aided by the enthusiasm of Henry Moore, out of whom he conjured an introduction, Ayrton brought this relatively little-known genius to the attention of a far wider public in a subtly written and comprehensive work. It is a loss to art history that he never had time to write his projected monumental survey of the art and practice of bronze sculpture.

But he could also be non-celebratory. He could also, bravely, change his mind, and it is illuminating to read, in rapid succession, his essays on Picasso (all available in *The Rudiments of Paradise*, that most eclectic of all collections) entitled "The Master of Pastiche", "A Reply to Myself" and "The Midas Minotaur".

The three essays span the three decades of Ayrton's perceptions and preoccupations. In the first, dated 1944, Ayrton questioned Picasso's at that time unquestioned eminence and concluded that: "The whole body of Picasso's work amounts in my opinion, to a vast series of brilliant paraphrases based on the history of art." Ayrton in 1956 mildy retracted some of his strictures but re-emphasised others; drew a parallel, in terms of repute, between Picasso and Liszt; and emphasised the talent but drew the line at the genius. "The Midas Minotaur", published in 1970, refers in detail, and with some sympathy but by no means uncritically, to John Berger's Penguin study, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, a book which Ayrton had himself been asked to write. In declining, he had suggested Berger as a substitute, and Berger, in the first serious, long analysis of Picasso as less than a titanic and universal genius, inscribed the copy he sent Ayrton to that effect and wrote to Ayrton that he believed Michael to be "a prophetic exception" to the world-wide chorus of adulation.

"The Midas Minotaur" is almost a paradigm of the relationship of Ayrton to Picasso, of Picasso to the Minotaur, of the Minotaur to Ayrton, and of Picasso to King Midas. Ayrton's analysis probes the themes of vigour and weakness, impotence and old age, fame and its curses, asses' ears and irony, and it looks forward to Ayrton's last prose work, his novel, *The Midas Consequence*.

The hero of *The Midas Consequence*, a novel published some two years ago to a strange mixture of derision, hatred, puzzled respect and wary admiration, is a very old and fabulously wealthy artist called Capisco. The anagramatically inclined inevitably identified him with Picasso, but this was facile. Capisco did, of course, have much of Picasso; but, with a nice mixture of eclecticism and egotism, Ayrton had in fact created an artist-hero who contained fragments of Matisse, de Chirico, Henry Moore and himself. He was also, since the author was not exactly a man short of inventive powers, a character in *fiction*, who performs properly invented acts in a novel of great ingenuity, using a number of cinematic techniques and devices in a novel whose very framework is the making of a documentary about the artist hero. (The book, incidentally, is dedicated as an act of both friendship and homage to that great documentary film-maker, Basil Wright, with whom the ever versatile Ayrton made a film on Leonardo drawings and another on Greek Sculpture.)

If, in retrospect, *The Midas Consequence* is a less satisfactory novel than its predecessor, *The Maze Maker* I suspect the reason is to be found in

[1] Readers of ENCOUNTER may well recall Walter Allen's illuminating essay on the genesis of the book which was published in the August 1973 issue of ENCOUNTER.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ayrton's preoccupation with myth. In *The Midas Consequence* he dealt with modern myth which is no more than fame (and fame in the end, like Capisco's fabulous wealth, is transitory) while ancient myth is, perhaps by definition, sufficiently everlasting and permanent and could bear more readily the full weight of Ayrton's erudite inventiveness. To a contemporary artist like Ayrton the modern titans like Picasso or Moore appeared not so much Minotaurs as minatory. They dare not be imitated, and one runs mortal risks if one comes too close. The genuine mythology of the classical past is safer and, because more complex, more rewarding. Both Picasso and Ayrton *made* modern Minotaurs, and I cannot help thinking that is why *The Maze Maker*, which deals, among other things, with the origin of the legendary Minotaur, is a more powerful book, and the identification of author and protagonist/narrator is total:

> "My name is Daedalus and I am a technician. This I chose to be. I have made many things in many places and done so cunningly, for that is the meaning of my name. I have constructed buildings and planned fortifications. I am proficient in stone-carving and I can make the forms of Gods in wood, competently joined. I have made many tools to do these things and invented others to make the work simpler and have it better done. Also I can paint images and I am adept at mechanical contrivance. All these things I can do as well as any other, be he who he may. . . ."

"The archetypal Maker", in William Golding's phrase, threads the Nautilus, constructs the artificial cow in which Pasiphae and the Bull conceive the Minotaur, builds the labyrinth at Knossos, and creates the wings with which his son Icarus commits his fatal act of hubris.

The parallels between life and art are intertwined: like his heroic Daedalus, he incessantly sought new ways of making and doing things.

If his erudition made him culturally eclectic, his dexterity and his acute feeling for both natural object and effective materials gave him a magpie-like physical eclecticism. He used the skeletons of birds in paintings and collages, the skulls and bones of animals in sculpture.

All his fiction, the two novels, the prose and verse fragment *The Testament of Daedalus* (the precursor of *The Maze Maker* and, arguably, the best thing he ever wrote) and his collection of illustrated short stories, *Fabrications*, a kind of visual counterpart and homage to Borges's *Ficciones*, dealt largely with artists and their relationship to mythology. Ultimately Ayrton was a mythopoeic figure. Once he had done the conventionally talented work on which his early reputation was built, everything that followed was deeply rooted in mythology and antiquity. A Cretan landscape would contain the shape of a female Cycladic figure; his female drawings became Oracles or the Cumaean Sybil; sculpted figures of bathers or acrobats gave way to the Minotaur Talos. When he tired of mere figures he turned to mazes, and his most celebrated, and certainly his largest, work is a colossal maze built for an eccentric but enlightened American millionaire; and there it is, at Arkville, N.Y., superbly impenetrable, and with a life-size Minotaur at its almost unattainable centre. And who's to say who made the grander gesture, Armand Erp in paying for it or Michael Ayrton in constructing it with true Daedalian cunning?

Even in his most technically complex sculptures, with their bisected heads, reflecting surfaces, Perspex dividing screens, the emotions were always as powerful as the intellect. His various versions of the Minotaur convey pity and terror and pain, and, how typical that he should himself describe his creation more succinctly and movingly than a critic could:

> *What is a man that I am not a man*
> *Sitting cramped pupate in this chrysalis?*
> *My tongue is gagged with cud and lolls round words*
> *To speak impeded of my legend death.*
> *My horns lack weapons' purpose, cannot kill*
> *And cannot stab the curtain of the dark.*

AYRTON WAS CLEARLY fascinated with the nature and ambiguity of man and animal. The Minotaur was the figure that most clearly expressed his pain, while Daedalus and Icarus most deeply expressed his obsession with not merely flight but a quest for a mastery of stress, a desire to transcend disability and literally take wing. Think for a moment of what it meant from young manhood onwards to be attacked by a distressing and crippling form of arthritis that rarely left him free of pain, made it impossible for him to walk any distance, and, if he wanted to look at his interlocutor, forced him to turn his entire body to face you, since he could not turn his head and neck. No wonder so many of his human figures are shown in postures of stress: oracles trying to utter, or man trying to take off. Perhaps also that is why, quite often, and strangely for a man who loved women (and, particularly, well-rounded women), his female figures were sometimes oddly ungainly. Curves became angular in the way that arthritically-attacked bones metamorphose. The standing male figures in his later period did not always give the impression of being able to run, or even to walk; they seemed to be rooted in the earth, or trying to escape from it.

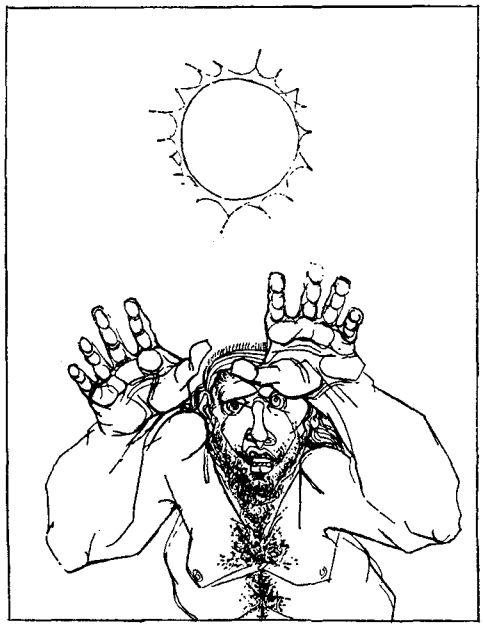
Like any other artist, he took himself seriously but, unlike some others, he had a capacity for laughing at himself, even for self-mockery as in that thoroughly ingenious bespectacled, large-wart-and-all self-portrait in his jacket design for *Fabrications*. He had the wit to attach as an

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

epigraph to *The Testament of Daedalus* these lines (from *Henry VI*, Part III):

Why what a peevish fool was that of Crete
That taught his son the office of a fowl. . . .

MICHAEL HAD A habit of doing one a good turn now and again while simultaneously heaving a substantial burden, in the nicest possible way, on to one's shoulders. Many years ago the co-editor of ENCOUNTER, in an earlier life, asked me to become Art Critic of *The Listener*. The burden for someone not yet 30, to fill the post once held by Herbert Read and Wyndham Lewis, was slight compared with Ayrton arranging with the BBC that I should fill in for him on *Round Britain Quiz* while he went abroad. Not only did I have to partner Denis Brogan but, said Michael, "by God you'd better win!" Well, perhaps because they fed us easy questions, or because Sir Denis and I had a madly complementary knowledge of things American, we just managed it by a point or two. But it was, win or lose, quite impossible to match Ayrton's urbanity and fearsome erudition, backed as it was by an alarming total recall. (And how odd, or perhaps how very English, that Brogan's standing as an academic was never harmed by his quiz supremacy, but for Ayrton the artist to do the same thing represented a distinct diminution of reputation.)



ONE LAST, and poignant memory. Some time ago he suffered a painful and undiagnosed illness and very nearly died. He was so ill and drugged that even his closest friends could not see him. During that time the RAF Museum at Hendon was opened and, having two small sons, I became a regular visitor. When, at the very last moment, an intuitive neurologist finally made the right diagnosis, and a particularly vicious diabetes was controlled, I described these visits to Michael and, as the wasted flesh slowly returned and the skeletal man once again became robust, we planned a first excursion together to that splendid memorial to the brave young men and their flying machines. Michael, who despite his immobile neck was (with the aid of a few extra mirrors) an impeccable driver, drove to the great Hendon hangar which, during his recovery, had very sensibly bought one of his best Icarus statues. On the way there and back, and during our rapturous inspection of Sopwith Camels and other aeronautica (about which, inevitably, he discoursed to the Curator who had greeted us, with knowledge and authority), he expounded to me his last, tangential venture.

He had been reflecting on the nature of mirrors and the mirror image. It was his final obsession, and over the next 18 months he explored every conceivable aspect of mirror images: science, philosophy, psychology, literature, music, mathematics, physiology, architecture and art tumbled about in his brain. What first emerged was the script for a 13-part BBC TV series, and the basis of a quite revolutionary book. Michael, was the onlie begetter, the scriptwriter, the producer's right hand, and was, with that wonderful, bearded, leonine head and that seductive voice, to be the presenter and interpreter in what was clearly going to be something new in the communication of complex visual ideas to a mass audience.

It was the obsessive topic of all our conversations for months as this formidably erudite man who had not been formally educated, unfolded the *ne plus ultra* of enlightened, intuitive and deductive eclecticism.

On Sunday, 16 November 1975, after lunch at Bradfields with Professors Moses I. Finley and G. S. Kirk, with whom he had discussed the minutiae of a translation of Archilocus which he was illustrating (a first proof of one of the etching, his last more or less finished work, is reproduced here), he drove to his London flat. That evening he had a massive coronary and, mercifully, since he could never have put up with an inactive life, was dead within minutes.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Kofi Awoonor

IN RESPONSE to agitations from our own members and appeals from anxious colleagues and friends of Kofi Awoonor, the Union of Writers of the African Peoples took up the matter of this writer's detention at its last meeting in Dakar, 6 February 1976. A resolution was passed at the joint Assembly of the Union with the Association of Researchers and Scholars of the African World, which deplored the detention of writers and citizens without trial, and specifically called upon the Government of Ghana to honour its belief in the fundamental human rights of all citizens by acting swiftly to restore Kofi Awoonor to liberty or else bring him to trial for his alleged offences.

Since then, the Union has also made representations to the authorities in Ghana. An interview was granted to me, as the Secretary-General of the Union, by the Inspector-General of Police (also Commissioner for Internal Affairs) on Thursday 19 February 1976. During this interview, I enquired into the reasons for Kofi Awoonor's detention, the conditions in which he is being held, and also requested an interview with the detainee. The Inspector-General stated that the authorities are convinced that Kofi Awoonor was in some way involved in activities of a subversive nature against the Government of Ghana. On the grounds that enquiries were still going on, that others involved were still being sought, he refused permission for the proposed visit but added that Mr Awoonor's wife has been allowed to visit him. The Commissioner also insisted that Kofi Awoonor is being treated humanely and promised to allow a representative of the Union to visit him once enquiries are completed.

The commissioner reassured me that the detained writer is allowed reading material and agreed to receive books for Mr Awoonor which would be promptly delivered. These books have since been delivered to the Inspector-General's office, and we hope that they will actually get to him.

The Union of Writers of the African Peoples, while thanking the Commissioner for the courtesies to the Union, remains disquieted by the refusal to allow a direct interview with Kofi Awoonor. We wish to reiterate our opposition to the detention of citizens without trial. It is now over three months since Kofi Awoonor was detained and we feel that this is more than sufficient time to determine a course of action in respect of his presumed guilt or innocence. We therefore appeal very strongly to the government of Ghana to release Kofi Awoonor immediately or bring him to trial without further delay. We also urge an end to the silence surrounding Kofi Awoonor since his detention is now an open secret, and official silence in such matters only breeds fear and alarm in the minds of concerned individuals.

WOLE SOYINKA

Secretary-General
Union of Writers of the African Peoples
Accra, Ghana

Fairlie & Simultaneity

IN HIS "Transatlantic Letter to England" [ENCOUNTER, January], Henry Fairlie recalled that, listening to radio news of the February 1974 election, he and some fellow British expatriates "shared an earnest desire that Britain should have a strong government, preferably led by Harold Wilson."

A few pages later Mr Fairlie himself supplied words to express my reaction to this statement. After quoting two comments by Doris Lessing on the "Angry Young Men" which he found contradictory, he added, "What is interesting is how she thought she could say both things simultaneously."

CYRIL H. DAVIES

Bethesda,
Maryland

Trade Unions & the "English Sickness"

THE QUEST for social justice, which Peregrine Worsthorne [ENCOUNTER, January] believes gives "moral legitimacy" to British trade unions and to be a source of their strength, means little more to the rank-and-file than envy of the softer life and higher incomes of other classes and a determination to grab more for themselves. There is, however, another side embodied in leaders like Mr Joe Gormley and which gives them some moral authority; and that is their insistence on the plain fact that modern social life cannot exist without the work of men such as miners.

Much industrial unrest might evaporate if we had an incomes policy based on the principle of the essentiality of work which gave proper financial and social recognition to those who dig the nation's coal, grow its food, provide the power for its homes and factories, keep its streets safe from predators, man its emergency services, nurse the sick and injured, and manufacture and supply the basic goods and skilled services on which we all depend for the means of life and for making that life bearable.

Unfortunately, British trade unions have grown up with the Marxist idea that only manual workers count because they alone contribute to the nation's health and wealth. This has led to non-manual brain workers who supply knowledge, skill, and organising capacity being classed with idlers and parasites (or gamblers and speculators), and almost as undeserving of respect and consideration. I do not suppose that Mr Gormley or Mr Scargill believe that the men who invented, designed, and constructed the complex machinery in the mines, or the scientists who discovered the principles on which it is based, should be given no credit for the winning of coal; one gets the impression from them that in mining only manual workers count. But, of course, James Watt and Humphry Davy and others like them also have honoured places in the history of mining.

As a counterpart to the TUC, we need a national Confederation of Brain Workers, organised and ready to withdraw their services as need be. I see a hopeful sign in the industrial action recently taken by hospital consultants. At present, the experts and polymaths, the thinkers and highly skilled professions, the essential organisers and planners, have

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no collective voice and little of the weight and influence in the counsels of the nation to which they are entitled. But they will not get this influence until they are organised and willing to threaten governments and disrupt social life like the working-class unions.

A link-up between organised middle-class brain-workers and the trade unions, each recognising the essentiality of the other, might give this country the nucleus of the genuine ruling class it needs. All we have at present are politicians and bureaucrats who do not create an ounce of real wealth, or add to the sum of human knowledge or invent new techniques, and who fail conspicuously to check retrograde action and to prevent the rise of foreseeable new social evils.

When we ponder the problem of unions and the harm they can do Mr Worsthorne should remember the social problems for which they *cannot* be blamed: *e.g.* the rise of the race problems in post-War Britain. Nor can unions influence the international monetary system, or prevent unemployment and make new jobs, or guarantee the supply of raw materials from abroad, or sell exports.

N. A. SMITH

Bournemouth

Remembering Whittaker Chambers

An Exchange between Diana Trilling & Sidney Hook

THE FOLLOWING is a slightly amended and, I hope, improved version of a letter I wrote to Professor Sidney Hook referring to statements he made about my husband, Lionel Trilling, in a recent issue of your magazine [ENCOUNTER, January].

Dear Sidney:

The January issue of ENCOUNTER has just reached me and you will understand that for several reasons it was moving and important to me. I hope you will therefore not think it carping of me if I raise a strenuous question about the accuracy of that part of your autobiographical fragment, "The Strange Case of Whittaker Chambers," which refers to Lionel. Unless you can show me a notation of a lunch date with Lionel and Chambers in a diary of the year 1934, I must insist that you have thoroughly confused Lionel with someone else who instituted that luncheon party.

In the first place, Lionel was not at all the kind of person who undertook, as other of our friends did, to argue the theories of political radicalism. I find it inconceivable that he would have been so concerned with Chambers's view of what was meant by Social Fascism as to initiate an occasion to enlighten Chambers on this score.

Second, it was in the Spring of 1933 that Chambers visited me to ask me to receive mail for him, a visit which was interrupted by a telephone call in which I learned of the suicide of a close friend—this date, 26 April, 1933, I have now established from *The New York Times* obituary files. Chambers immediately suppressed his purpose in coming to see me in order to stay and comfort me. A few days later, however, he telephoned me for my reply to his request. But in the interim there had been so sharp an ideological break between the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners and some few of us, including myself, who were working with this "innocents' " group that he said he supposed he now knew what my answer must be, and I don't think he listened very closely while I tried to explain that my answer would have been negative even if there had not been any ideological rift. After that, neither Lionel nor I had further relations with Chambers except for one thoroughly mysterious night-visit to our house (I know this was in late 1933 or early 1934 because of my recollection of where we were living at the time), the meeting with him at the famous Halloween party at the home of Anita Brenner Glusker when Herbert Solow brought Chambers "above ground", and one or two accidental encounters from which he fled in embarrassment. Indeed, if you read Lionel's new introduction to *The Middle of the Journey* in which he identifies the character of Maxim as having been based on Chambers, you will see that Lionel never thought of him as a friend at any time, even when they were undergraduates at Columbia. The kind of occasion you describe would thus not have been at all in keeping with their relationship.

Third, you say that this lunch took place in a vegetarian restaurant. Lionel loathed vegetarian restaurants and I doubt he had ever heard of the one you identify as the place of your meeting.

Fourth, naming this restaurant you locate it near Madison Square. To my knowledge, Lionel never had business anywhere near Madison Square. This would have been quite outside the usual territory of his activity.

Fifth and finally, your direct quotation—after more than forty years you say you "vividly recall his words"—of Lionel's presumed telephone call to you the evening after this luncheon is, to me, about as unconvincing a re-creation of a Trilling dialogue as I can readily imagine. The language has no ring of his style, and I find it impossible to believe that he could have been "distressed" because Chambers did or did not properly understand what Social Fascism meant to you.

In short, I believe you are confusing Lionel with someone else. As I say, you will have to show me your date book for 1934 or some equally substantial proof before I can entertain the idea that Lionel was the character in your report. Otherwise I will count on you to make the necessary correction in *Encounter*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN REPLY TO THIS COMMUNICATION I received an extended letter from Professor Hook, some two typewritten pages, in which he offered no single point of substantive proof that his remembrance was accurate but simply reiterated his faith in the infallibility of his memory. He also asked why I seemed to be so disturbed by the incident as he reported it. The answer to the latter question is very simple. In addition to refusing to give credence to my own recollection of the truth of my husband's relationship with Chambers, Mr Hook also gives the lie to my husband's own account of it in the last piece he published before his death, a piece he had produced with his usual caution for exactness of statement: the new introduction to his novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, which he also published as an essay in *The New York Review of Books*.

DIANA TRILLING

New York City

I AM ASTONISHED, perplexed, and somewhat dismayed at Diana Trilling's reaction to the account of my luncheon meeting with Lionel Trilling and Whittaker Chambers. She believes I have in some way impugned the integrity of Lionel Trilling for whom from the earliest days of our acquaintanceship I have always had warm esteem and respect. Nothing was further from my mind.

This chapter of my autobiography was about Chambers and not Trilling. In its present form it was written last Spring when Trilling was alive and I had every expectation of his reading it.

The meeting I described took place just as I described it and where I described it. About the date I am not so sure. Who keeps date books of more than forty years ago? The meeting was a memorable one for me since it was the first time I had met Chambers about whom I had heard so much. It became all the more memorable because of Trilling's report of Chambers' characterisation of me as untrustworthy because I had a "Social-Democratic face." During the course of the years I have often related that story when Chambers' case and personality were being discussed; in consequence it remained fresh in my mind. What is decisive to me is that I have a distinct recollection of Lionel Trilling himself in conversation with me on several occasions making some wry references to that meeting (the last time at a gathering at the Kristols some years ago). The remark about my "Social-Democratic face" was still amusing to him.

It is inconceivable to me that I could have confused Lionel Trilling with anyone else during the Thirties when politically and in other ways we were closer than in subsequent years. Actually I have a flood of memories of talks with Trilling during this period on political and other matters, many on the telephone, and of meetings with him. Nor was this the only time we had lunch. Some of our meetings were about his dissertation on Matthew Arnold on which he was working. (He acknowledges my criticisms in the published version.) One, a few years later, a luncheon meeting at my home in Barrow Street, was of crucial importance to him and his career at Columbia, for he had been told by the Chairman of the English Department that he had no future there. (I shall relate this story in another chapter.) I mention these matters to indicate the unlikelihood of my confusing Trilling with someone else. And certainly not with the three individuals she originally mentioned whose names she withdrew as this exchange was going to press. The absurdity of her notions would have been manifest.

THERE WAS NOTHING STARTLING to me about Trilling's request that I meet him and Chambers for lunch. Nor was I surprised that he wanted me to discuss the theory of "social-fascism" to which Chambers was wedded at the time. This absurd theory was the root of most of the differences that developed between the Communist Party and the intellectuals in its fringe groups even before the policy flowing from it helped Hitler come to power in Germany. A year later it led the Communist Party violently to disrupt the rally at Madison Square Garden called by the Socialist Party in support of the Austrian workers shot down by Dollfuss' forces. (That occasioned the first *public* protest against the Communist Party line by erstwhile fellow-travellers.) In short, the theory of social-fascism was not an abstract notion or an idle radical conceit: it had fateful consequences that concerned all of us, including Trilling.

DIANA TRILLING has carefully reworked her original letter to me in the light of my reply to her objections, but even so her grounds for disputing the truth of my account are far from convincing. She claims that Lionel Trilling was not the kind of person "to argue the theories of political radicalism." If discussion is covered by the term "argue", he certainly discussed them with me and often. At the time we met at Yaddo, he was not a radical. He did not become one by osmosis. I do not mean to imply that I was his political mentor, but I was not without political influence on him.

I don't recall who suggested the meeting place. It may have been I; it may have been Chambers. Schildkraut's restaurant was noteworthy for its variety of dairy and fruit dishes, omelettes and salads besides its vegetarian specialties. I am not a vegetarian either. Did Trilling eat only meat all the time? I located it "not far from Madison Square" because if I have identified the restaurant correctly, that's just where it was.[1] Does one never lunch "outside the usual territory" of one's activity? It was not outside mine.

Nor is it unbelievable that Trilling could have had a lunch that his wife did not know about.

[1] Since writing the above I have discovered in the Manhattan telephone directory for 1934 a listing for Schildkraut's restaurant at 4 West 28 St. I did not mislocate it.

I take this occasion also to correct an error in my piece to which Isaac Don Levine has called my attention. Herbert Solow's articles on the Rubins-Robinson case appeared not in the N.Y. *World-Telegram* but in the N.Y. *Sun*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Except for the last sentence of our telephone conversation about my "Social-Democratic face", I cannot swear it is word for word literally accurate; but the gist of it is. Since the words are mine, it is my style not Trilling's. And although Trilling's report of Chambers' reaction surprised me, it is perfectly coherent with the picture he draws of him in his new Introduction to his novel as someone whose mind is "little trained to discrimination and all too easily seduced into equating portentous utterance with truth. . . ."

WHY, THEN DID Trilling fail to mention this meeting in his new Introduction? I do not know. He may have forgotten about it. He may have believed that it took place much earlier than it did. He may have thought it unimportant. That meeting obviously meant more to me than to him. The fact that he does not mention this meeting does not prove it didn't take place. For there was something even more important that he also failed to mention, *viz.*, that Chambers had asked the Trillings to receive mail for him in other words to serve as a "letter drop" for his underground work. In her original letter to me Diana Trilling wrote that the luncheon meeting I describe "would not have been in keeping with the sort of relationship that they [Chambers and Trilling] had ever had, even at best." I find this a very curious assertion. I do not know what sort of relationship existed between them: whether it was friendship as Chambers himself seems to have believed or less than friendship. Each probably perceived it differently. But whatever that relationship was, it could not have been one of casual acquaintanceship. One does not make proposals of this kind to casual acquaintances or their wives and "stay and comfort" them. Whatever that relationship was, the fact that Chambers made such a proposal—whose presupposition is implicit faith and trust in the person to whom it is made—and of which Trilling could not have been unaware although he does not mention it, does not preclude in the least a luncheon meeting of the kind we held to discuss an important issue. It seems to me that it is clearly unwarranted to assert that the luncheon meeting was not in keeping with the sort of relationship Chambers and Trilling "had ever had, even at best." Indeed, it was very much in keeping.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a fallibilist in my theory of knowledge. My memory is not infallible. Neither is anyone else's, including Diana Trilling's. I may have been mistaken about the time of the meeting. Perhaps it was a few months earlier. Although I have no reason for assuming it, this may also be true about some other details. But I am as sure as I am of anything that has occurred in my past, that this meeting took place. What possible reason could I have for bringing Trilling into the account? Had I suspected that Diana Trilling would misconstrue it as an attack on Lionel's integrity—which needs no defence—I would have described the meeting without identifying Trilling by name. For I was writing about Chambers and his case and was trying to convey something about his personality and unhappy fate.

SIDNEY HOOK

Stanford, California

Ashby's "Doom"

AN OTHERWISE penetrating and thought-provoking article by Lord Ashby, "A Second Look at Doom" [ENCOUNTER, March], is marred by his concluding message that those disciplines directed to the study and understanding of man

> "are still regarded as second-class citizens in the hierarchy of the sciences."

The unspoken and erroneous premise is that these disciplines are to be considered "citizens" of Science in the first place.

When those who study sociology, politics and economics begin to draw away from their imitation of Science and its working tool, the Scientific Method, so as to properly develop their own tools or methods, then realistic advances may be made in our common goal of learning to live with each other and within our inherited environment.

Lord Ashby did not discuss the role of space colonisation, including the exploration and recovery of non-renewable material resources which are literally "out of this world." I would be interested in his prophetic views on this subject. Science might come to our rescue after all!

JOHN H. SHURTLEFF

Chicago, Illinois

Experiencing the Infinite

ALTHOUGH YOUR CORRESPONDENT N. G. D. Choat (September) is not "suggesting that Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Shah are infinite", he is, it seems, stating that "they have had experience of it." What, then, counts as experience of the Infinite? How is it possible to have experience of the Infinite without being in some sense Infinite—if only for a finite space? Presumably the realisation that there is no end to, say, a sequence of numbers does not count as experience of the "unend" number!

CHARLES BYASS

Blackpond Lane,
Farnham Common,
Bucks.

IF YOU HAVE difficulty obtaining any of the books reviewed or advertised in ENCOUNTER, we shall be pleased to forward your enquiry to the publisher. Please address it for the attention of John Hall at ENCOUNTER.

ENCOUNTER Magazine is published monthly in London by Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WATMOUGHS LIMITED, IDLE, BRADFORD; AND LONDON

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

London

CATCH-PHRASE: "Mr Wilson, in an unusually low-key speech": What does it mean? Pitch can be low. Metaphorically, I suppose, the tone of a speech can be low. Key can be major or minor, but never low. This catch-phrase, so uncritically used, like its friend "the grass-roots", is spreading like a weed and should be eradicated. Low profile also.

THE TIMES

London

BODLEY'S END: *I have before me a report of what is described as a "hard-hitting conference," held jointly by the Library Association and the Community Relations Commission, on "Library Services in a Multi-racial Community."*

There is nothing in it which will be new to the student of the race relations industry and the enormous literature it generates. But laymen, who may not yet realise what is going on under their feet and how determined and dedicated is the effort to transform this country into something which will no longer be recognisable as such, should consider a typical extract:

"Ansel Wong (Education Co-ordinator, Ahfiwe School, Brixton) said that libraries were 'a very conservative and racist service.' The middle-class ethos had to change, and there had to be greater empathy and sympathy to sub-cultural values in the staff, from the porters to the seniors.

"Librarians must mirror society and must include forms of creativity other than books which are 'very much an aspect of the community which is dying.' The majority of black young people 'already regard libraries as an irrelevant anachronism' and would continue to do so unless libraries adjusted their attitudes."

It may take some little time to remove all the books from public libraries (and later, by legislation, from private ones) and fill them up with sub-cultural values instead. In the meantime, much can be done to ensure that only warranted multi-racial, non-elitist, non-middle-class books remain on the shelves. As one delegate said, she

"did not want her children growing up reading biased, ignorant books. The sooner they learnt Indian names, and the size of Africa, the better."

Another woman delegate, possibly an irrelevant, anachronistic aspect of the community which is dying,

"wanted a reassurance that the books being recommended at the conference would not be racist in an anti-white sense."

She was soon put in her place by another delegate, Dorothy Kuya, who

"could not reassure her on that point; that would be to expect blacks to be more tolerant than whites in the past."

Such is the society, or one aspect of it, which librarians are told they must mirror.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Washington

IDEA-KILLERS: *Every leap year, a sinister breed of intellectual hit men step to the fore of opinion leadership [William Safire writes]. They are the idea-killers. Their contract is to riddle with ridicule new ideas from political candidates.*

Inside their violin cases, the idea-killers carry an arsenal of groans, titterings, contemptuous hoo-hahs and statistical refutations. "Half-baked" is their favoured epithet; "not well thought through" follows, and along comes "bumbling staff work," "ideological extremism" and "political suicide."

This is not to suggest we take new ideas uncritically, but to suggest that we treat them, at least at first, as matters to be explored rather than invitations to derision.

Killing an idea is easy; conceiving one is hard. Groping for new ways to solve problems may make a man vulnerable to the smug smirks of "smart politics," and a new idea is not always a good idea, but this may be the year that the idea-killers walk into a long-overdue ambush.

NEW YORK TIMES

Oberammergau

REVISIONISM: A dispute over Oberammergau's Passion Play may have to be settled by a referendum among the citizens of this Bavarian village, Herr Ernst Zwink, the mayor, said today.

The dispute is over the present text, written in 1860 by Alois Daisenberger, which has been attacked as antisemitic because it blames the Jews for crucifying Christ.

Hans Schwaighofer, who will produce the next play in 1980, wants to use an inoffensive text written in 1750 by Father Ferdinand Rosner. But a protest group of villagers and actors say the 1750 text is stilted, and propose amending the Daisenberger version.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beirut

ARABIC WORDS: *"We can only survive by building bridges to the Lebanese Moslems," a dissident young Christian woman said in the flawless French she learned at home and in private Christian schools. "Now we have burned those bridges."*

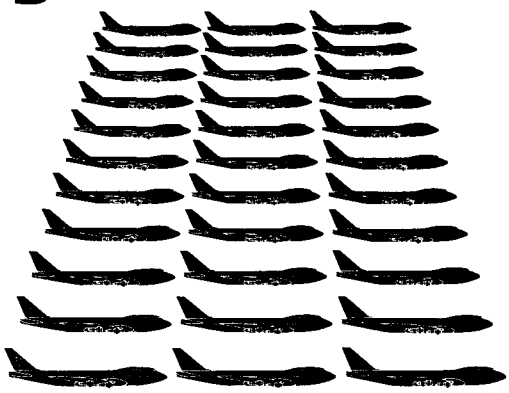
More than two years ago, she left her parents' house in a wealthy Christian district and moved to a Moslem area. She wanted to learn Arabic "and just every day talk to the baker, the shoe repairman, the newspaper dealer in this area and show them that Christians were just like them. I have done it but I have been almost alone."

In the last nine months, she has improved her Arabic greatly by reading the press here. "Yes, I have learned the Arabic words for many things recently—looting, killing, burning. I wait for the day when I will see the words for peace and national cooperation in our newspapers."

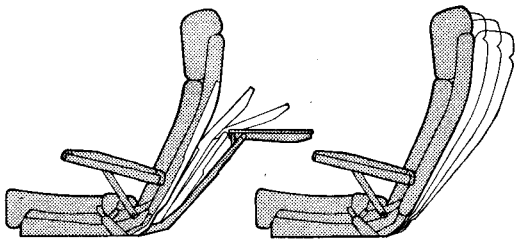
WASHINGTON POST

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

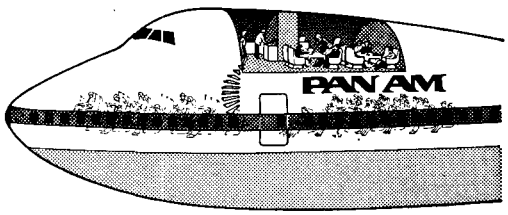
If you like 747s, you'll love Pan Am.



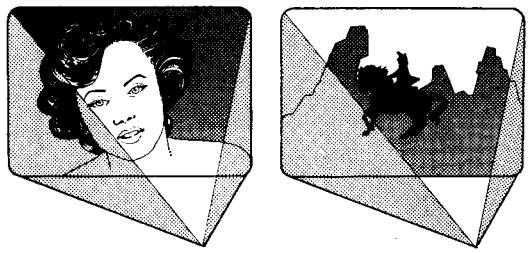
More 747s.
Pan Am has the world's largest fleet of 747s. The chances are, Pan Am will have a 747 flying where and when you want to go.



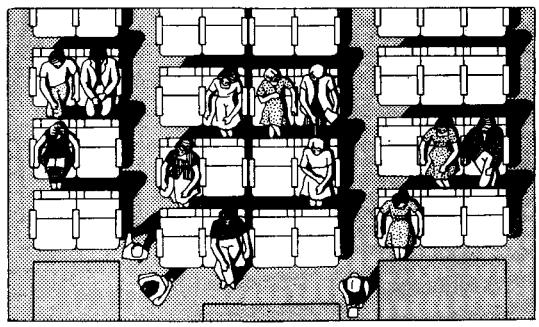
More comfort.
In Economy, Pan Am 747s have generously sized, reclining seats. There's room to work, room to relax. If you want a snooze, you'll find flying Pan Am is a dream.



First Class dining room.
Only Pan Am's 747s have an upstairs dining room for First Class passengers. You can choose from a full menu—for instance, Roast Beef carved at your table, Sole Dugléré or Kebab d'Agneau—accompanied of course by a choice of fine wines. Like all the best restaurants, you have to book early. So ask your secretary to reserve your table when she books your ticket across the Atlantic.



Choice of entertainment.*
Not just one, but two of the latest films when you cross the Atlantic; take your pick. Or a choice of eight tracks of stereo music and entertainment.



More space.
On our 747s, there's room to move around. Plenty of headroom, and space for you to stretch your legs—while you're in your seat or walking about.

So next time you fly, take it easy. Travel in style on a Pan Am 747. And enjoy the comfort of Pan Am's World.

PAN AM
The world's most experienced airline.

* Regulations require a nominal charge for entertainment.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED